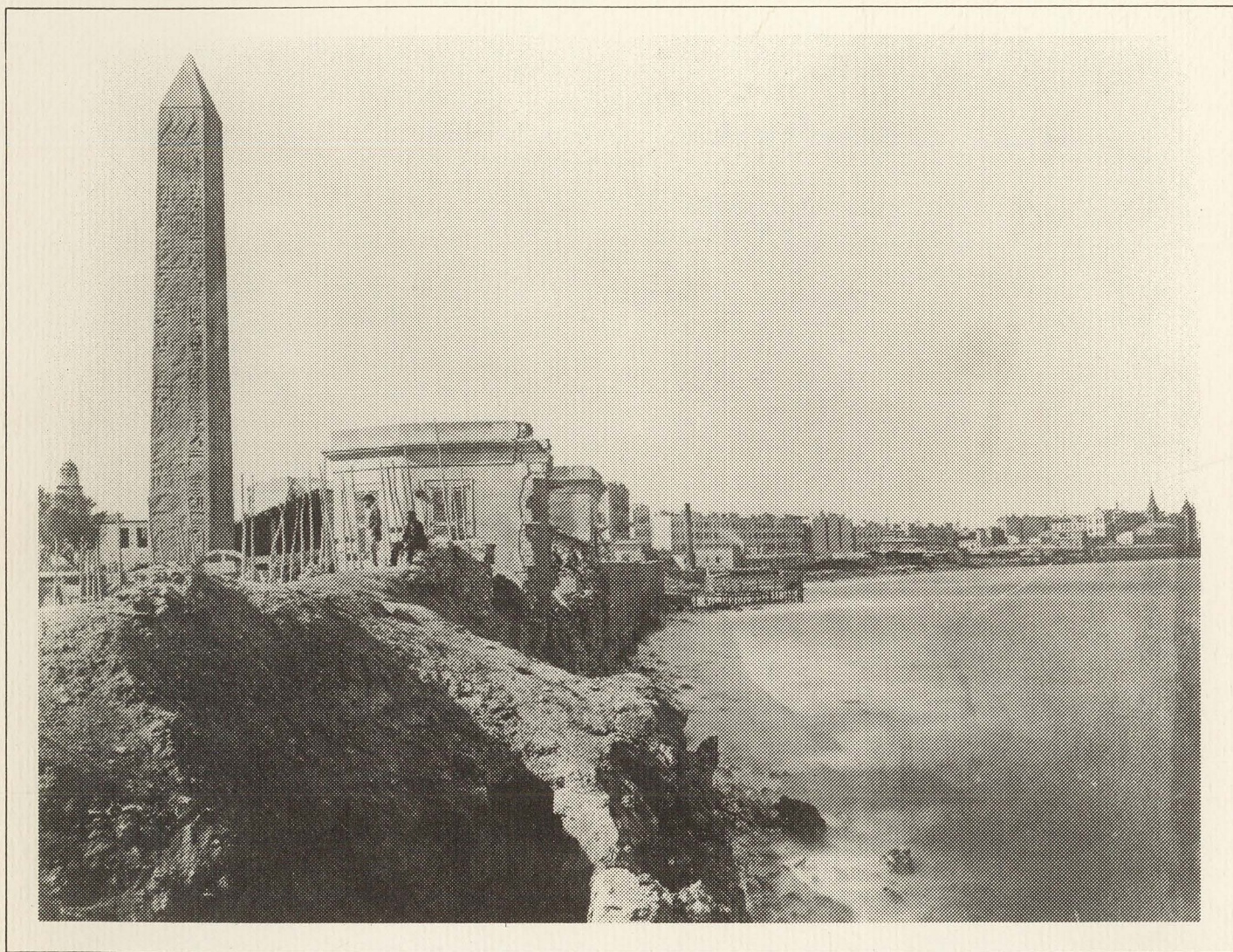


# Newsletter

OF THE AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT





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# Newsletter

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Cover Illustration: (Untitled) Cleopatra's Needle,  
Alexandria. Photographer unknown, c. 1870s.  
(For details, see Barry Iverson's article below).

## WRITING TO BE HEARD

Colloquial Arabic Verse and the  
Press in Egypt (1877-1930)

MARILYN BOOTH

**Editor's note:** Marilyn Booth, who has an A.B. degree in Arabic from Harvard and a D. Phil. in Modern Arabic Literature from Oxford where she was a Marshall Fellow, was an ARCE/National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow in 1986-87. Dr. Booth's special interest is women's writing in early 20th century Egypt. She is continuing research in the field while teaching at the American University in Cairo and doing free-lance translation of contemporary Arabic literature.

When Mahmud Ramzi Nazim founded his newspaper *Abu Qirdan* (The Egret) in September, 1924, he gave it the subheading *jarida fukahiyya intiqadiyya usbu'iyya* - "a weekly critical-humorous newspaper." This combination of attributes, "critical" and "humorous," graced the mastheads of many newspapers of the time, and signalled that the contents leaned heavily towards satirical commentary on the politics, personalities, and public behavior of the time.

An important element in *Abu Qirdan's* critical-humorous offerings was Nazim's weekly poem, commenting on a particularly trenchant event or an especially notorious personage. The founder-editor's weekly poem usually took up an entire newspaper page, and played the role of an editorial column as it drove home a general point emerging from whatever particular issue Nazim had chosen for the week. As an early member of al-Hizb al-Watani (The National[ist] Party), and then as a supporter of Sa'd Zaghlul, Nazim expressed strong nationalist views in his poetry, incorporating his comments on how best to build a vigorous society. Description of a chance encounter, a remembered scene, is transformed almost invariably into a poetic commentary on the times.

The assumption of a public role is nothing new in Arabic poetry. However, Nazim differed from those who



were considered the leading Egyptian poets of the time in that the poetry he published in *Abu Qirdan* was composed in colloquial Arabic. In the situation of diglossia which characterizes the Arabic-speaking world -- a situation wherein distinct levels of the language co-exist and are linked to different ranges of communication and expression, however much of those levels of language may encroach upon each other -- to compose in colloquial Arabic represents not only a choice of diction, but a stance. Distancing itself linguistically from the material of elite culture, colloquial poetry may be a statement about one's choice of audience; concomitantly, it may represent a felt need to act within the society through a form of communication understandable to all. The choice to compose colloquial poetry may be, but has not always been, an oppositional political statement, in that it takes as its linguistic base the language of the "man or woman on the street" rather than that associated with the formal, official communication and the mainstream literary heritage of the educated elites.<sup>1</sup>

And, in choosing the diction of everyday life, this poetry also takes the imagery of mundane lived experience as its figurative field. A political issue, reconstructed in colloquial poetry, takes on familiar and intimate resonances, no matter how metaphoric its poetic treatment is. While Nazim also composed poetry in *fusha* (classical or literary Arabic, the language of the heritage and the mainstream literary tradition), in his newspaper he chose to offer colloquial poems as his contribution to the public life.

In the mid-1920s, when *Abu Qirdan* appeared, the non-official press in Egypt had been flourishing for a half-century. Alongside the major dailies and magazines, many periodicals had been founded by individuals who felt a desire to intervene in the politics and social mores of the time. In this context of the "small press," colloquial poets started their own newspapers as a vehicle for their own compositions, a forum for readers' contributions, and an opportunity to comment, in prose and poetry, on whatever issues they found most pressing. Research carried out in 1986-87 on Egyptian colloquial poetry has revealed the pervasive nature of this poetry in the Egyptian press from the late 19th century on.<sup>2</sup> Most of those who have become known as fine colloquial poets received their start in this press; the contemporary movement in colloquial poetry in Egypt, which has developed in new directions since the 1950s, looks back to some of these earlier poets as their forebears.

However, colloquial poetry has received little attention from scholars, and it continues to draw the scorn, by and large, of mainstream cultural establishments in the Arab world. There are political as well as cultural reasons for this. Writing in colloquial Arabic has long been regarded as divisive, as un-Islamic, as an act which seeks to undermine the rich heritage of Arabic literature composed in *fusha*. While a few isolated individuals have at times called for the replacement of *fusha* by *al-ammiyya* -- the colloquial, or "common" language -- the overwhelming majority of poets see no conflict between the two. Collo-

quial poetry will never replace *fusha* poetry, but it does have, and had had in the past, its own role to play in the society and its own rich tradition.

To return to the 1920s: just one year after Nazim founded *Abu Qirdan*, the poet Badi' Khayri (also known for his theatrical writings) founded his own newspaper, *Alf Sinf* (A Thousand Sorts, f. Nov. 1925). This, too, is full of colloquial poetry: volume one (45 issues) carries 118 colloquial poems. Many of these are by Khayri and many others are by reader-contributors. Similarly, other poets founded periodicals: 'Isa Sabri started *al-Rassam* (The Representational Artist) in 1903, Fathi Muhammad launched *al-Asr al-Abbasi* (The Abbasid Age) in the same year, Mahmud Bayram al-Tunisi founded *al-Misalla* (The Obelisk) in 1919, Muhammad Yunus al-Qadi would found *al-Fannan* (The Artist) in 1927, and so forth. Other poets were heavily involved in the production of periodicals which carried their stamp -- and their poetry. One example is provided by Ahman 'Ashur Sulayman's participation in *al-Arnab* (The Rabbit, f. 1906). As in *Abu Qirdan*, the colloquial poems in all of these periodicals comment on a wide range of public issues.

The periodicals founded and/or edited by colloquial poets were not alone in publishing colloquial poetry in the early 20th century. Other newspapers and magazines had "resident colloquial poets" whose weekly contributions were, like those of Nazim, akin to today's weekly column: Khalil Nazir in *al-Sayf* (The Sword, f. 1910), Mahmud Bayram al-Tunisi in *al-Shabab* (Youth, f. 1918) and then in *al-Funun* (The Arts, f. 1926), Muhammad 'Abd Al-Mun'im, known as "Abu Buthayna," in *al-Fukaha* (Humor, f. 1926), and so forth. Among these, only *al-Fukaha* was the product of a large publishing house (Dar al-Hilal); the other periodicals publishing colloquial poetry still tended to be small operations, although *Ruz al-Yusuf* (f. 1925) would also soon start to publish this poetry on occasion. Many of those who started their own publications had already published regularly in these or other magazines, or would later do so. Khayri and Nazim had published many poems in *al-Sayf* during the 1920s, after Khalil Nazir's death; Nazim published in *al-Lata'if al-Musawwara* (Illustrated Quips, f. 1915) in 1926-27, where Muhammad Yunus al-Qadi, in turn, would become the "resident poet" in the 1930s. And it was the presses of these newspapers and magazines which often published their "columnists'" collections of poetry. The point of all this is that these periodicals provided a flourishing publication context for the finest colloquial poets of the time, who in turn moved back and forth from their own publications to those of others. For the researcher, these periodicals are a rich source both for the artistic development of this poetry and for the examination of colloquial poetry as an element of the social history of its time and place of production.

Arabic colloquial poetry has a long history; the first texts we have go back to 12th century A.D. Andalus and represent a tradition of strophic colloquial poetry known as *zajal*.<sup>3</sup> As this art spread across the Islamic Empire, the meaning of the term *zajal* was, not surprisingly, largely an

oral art. It was the advent of a non-official press geared towards an audience extending beyond the educated elite which gave *zajal* fertile ground for development. The newspapers of the 1920s mentioned above, and the predominance of *zajal* therein, were an extension of a practice begun by poet-journalists of the last quarter of the 19th century.

'Abdallah al-Nadim and Ya'qub Sannu', individuals remembered for their activity in a variety of fields, were important in introducing *zajal* in the 19th Century press. A nationalist activist who regarded communication to Egyptians outside of the urban elite as an integral part of political activity, al-Nadim gave speeches in colloquial Arabic and wrote plays for his students to perform, also in colloquial Arabic. He founded several periodicals, the two best-known being *al Tankit wa-al-Tabkit* (Raillery and Reproach, f. 1881) and *al Ustadh* (The Master, 1892). In both, colloquial dialogue and *zajal* treat all aspects of the nationalist call through the portrayal of everyday encounters and familiar behaviour. Sannu's newspaper activity grew out of his work as a playwright. His newspaper, *Abu Nazzara Zarga* (The Man with Blue Glasses, f. 1877) put together visual and verbal caricature through the interspersing of cartoons and colloquial poetry. A good example of what Sannu' was able to accomplish through *zajal* is found in the following poem wherein an encounter between an Egyptian and the wife of a British soldier leads to a reference to events in the Sudan. A prelude mocking the traditional poetic theme of *ghazal* (poetry celebrating the beloved) takes on satirical force in a way which only colloquial poetry can achieve, with the use of English dialogue in Arabic transcription and a pun on the Arabic and English meanings of *ful* (broadbeans/fool):<sup>4</sup>

ياحسنا لنجليزيه	أم عين زرقا وشعر أصفر
ياخسارة دالصبيه	في جوزها العسكري الأحمر
شفها المبارح يااسيادي	ما كاش حولها انجليز
فقلت لها ياميلدي	جيفي أكيس إيفيو بلين
.....	.....
أنا في عرضك وان كيس	قالت جوديم بلادى فول
بلا فول بلا شعير	ما تبغديش على
أنا ابن المهدي الكبير	إحلمى على شويه
.....	.....
فشفنا المهدي منصور	والجردون في الشق مكتوم
تاني يوم جابوه أسير	في مصيده سودانيه
.....	.....
أمام المهدي الشهير	مع ضباطه لنجليزيه
.....	.....

How pretty the Englishwoman is  
Blue-eyed and blonde  
That young thing's wasted, more's the pity  
On her husband,  
the ruddy soldier.  
I spied her yesterday, gentlemen  
No 'ingileez' around her  
So I said to her, "Ah, maylaydee  
Geef me a kees eef yoo bileez  
I'm at your mercy, wan kees!"  
She said "Goodeem blaadi fool!"  
Neither ful nor straw  
Don't be saucy with me!  
I'm the son of the great Mahdi  
So give me a little time ...  
We saw the Mahdi victorious  
And Gordon constipated [lit. hidden in a crevice]  
The next day, they brought [Gordon] as a prisoner  
In a Sudanese trap  
Before the famous Mahdi  
[Gordon stood] with his English soldiers.

While al-Nadim and Sannu' are justly famous for numerous activities, other poet-publishers were also entertaining and instructing their readership through *zajal*-journalism. Two contrasting examples are provided by Muhammed Tawfiq and Muhammad al-Najjar. Tawfiq founded his newspaper *Himarat Munyati* (The She-Donkey of My Wishes) in 1898; a near-complete run of the first four years (126 issues) yields 89 colloquial poems. Many of these are satirical attacks on major figures of the day: [it is said that Tawfiq was sent to prison for attacking Muhammad 'Abduh. In addition to Tawfiq's poems, *Himarat Munyati* is also full of readers' contributions. Here, however, we are reminded of a major problem encountered in studying this poetry--that of attribution--for I suspect that many of the "contributions" are Tawfiq's own compositions, attributed to others possibly for political reasons. These poems treat a range of issues. In the second volume (1899-1900), for instance, *zajals* satirize nepotism and bribery in the Awquaf Ministry, censure laxness and corruption in the Cairo police force, complain about the judicial system, and attack local weakness in the face of a harsh and growing foreign presence. Most of these poems, like the Classical Arabic ode, are constructed upon a series of themes. The internal transitions are often somewhat loose and contrived. A typical reader's *zajal* of this period, published in *Himrat Munyati*,<sup>5</sup> begins with greetings to the addressee and praises for his newspaper - noting how beneficial it is to the nation. The poem goes on to plea for a sympathetic ear, as the writer addresses a subject he says is bothering him. Description and analysis are followed by judgement and a lament on the state of the nation:



وبعد دا يابن الاوطمان  
 أحسن أنا قلبى ما يمان  
 لدي القمار فينا اتعبد  
 والفقر فينا متحكم  
 الشخص مننا يكسب له  
 وبعد ها يرجع عقله  
 يفضل على بخته يبيكى  
 وتنه من دهره يشكى  
 احنا السبب فى اللى جانا  
 ما حد غيرنا وداننا  
 الواد من الاروام يجرى  
 والقمار يفضل يجرى  
 وبعد ما كان متمسك  
 ومن فلوسنا يتكسب  
 يركب بقا فى العرييات  
 ويعيش منعهم باللمذات  
 وابن البلد يفضل محتاس  
 ويبقا عـبره بين الثامن  
 ونين بقا ينفعندمه  
 والدهر زحلق له قدمه  
 آدى الامور الى تبكى  
 لعين ياناس نيكى ونشكى

After [my greetings], O son of the fatherlands,  
 Listen to my words and ponder,  
 For my heart is woefully full  
 Of these disasters befalling [us].  
 Gambling has made progress among us  
 While the foreigner designed ruses for plunder  
 Poverty controls us completely -  
 Our Lord knows the situation:  
 One among us earns for himself  
 Two piastres, which he scatters right off  
 And then his mind returns:  
 The tears run from his eyes  
 He goes on weeping at his luck  
 When he's the source of his troubles,  
 He complains of his fate without cease  
 But what's fate got to do with it, brothers?  
 We are the cause of what's come to us  
 Of these calamities and griefs,  
 No one but ourselves took us  
 To gamble in the Greeks' [establishments].  
 The European lad scampers  
 To our country, his sleeves rolled up  
 Through gambling he wears us down  
 Aah! It's all planned in advance -

After appearing a fawning wretch  
He becomes a khawaga and talks big  
Through our money he becomes established,  
Goes around causing merry uproar.  
He rides around in the carriages  
And puffs himself up like a consul  
And lives pampered with pleasures  
Not to mention his arbitrary acts.

---

Ibn al-balad remains bewildered and caught;  
Misery is his strict master.  
He becomes a lesson among the people  
While each hour he regrets and repents.  
But where is his regret of any use  
After he has lost his money?  
For fate has caused his foot to slip  
And poverty has changed his conditions.  
Oh, these are the matters that make one weep  
And make the sound mind go mad!  
To whom, folks, shall we weep and complain  
When fate teases and betrays?

Tawfiq's own poems--and many of the *Himara's* "contributions"--are characterised by a diction which can best be described as "earthy"; this is in harmony with the tone of trenchant attack which dominates these poems. A very different example is provided by Shaykh Muhammad al-Najjar, a teacher at al-Azhar whose pedantic inclinations carried over into his *zajal* production. Most of his poems--and he was a prolific poet--are sermons on morals directed to "the man (and, very often, the woman) on the street." The diction is highly classical, and al-Najjar was far more careful than was Tawfiq to preserve a regularity of meter and a careful choice of rhyme scheme in his compositions. As a teacher, al-Najjar had a major influence on the next generation of colloquial poets, those such as Khalil Nazir, Imam al-'Abd, 'Izzat Saqr, and Yunus al-Qadi, who would become important to newspaper editors of the early 1900s. Al-Najjar is said to have held sessions at a cafe near Azbakiyya Gardens where he taught these aspiring poets their craft.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Najjar, too, founded his own newspaper, *Al-Argmul* (The Reed-Pipe, f.1894). Significantly, this publication did not bear on its masthead the *fukah-i-intiqadi* characterization; rather, his is a *jarida* 'ilmiyya adabiyya fukahiyya, a "humorous, literary, scientific newspaper," wherein the humorous element, relative to that in *Himarat Munyati*, is at a minimum. Al-Najjar's own poems are interspersed with those sent in by readers. Again we see that *zajal* composition and publication seem to have been activities in which the public, or at least a part of it, participated. Most of the poems published in *al-Argmul* are highly classical in diction and, like al-Najjar's, are thick with aphorisms commenting on the morals of the time. For instance, in the sixth volume (1901-1902) of *al-Argmul*, we find a *zajal* entitled "*Al-Argmul's* Poem on Gambling," which begins:

زجل الأرهول في لعب القمار

المطلع

يا لى تقول لعب القمار يتفعنى  
كل دى الرجل واشرب عليه واسمعنى

والربع من قمحه يكسب ويبه  
لما أقولك وأنصحك يا خيبه

د و ر

لما أقول وأنصحك يا هيايـف والنعم واجب لارتقاء الأمم  
رب الوری حرم علينا الميسر في محكمة والحكم عين الحكمة

*O one who says "Gambling benefits me"  
When a measure of his wheat wins [him] a  
thrice-larger measure,  
Eat this zajal, drink [coffee] upon it, and hear me  
When I speak and give you advice, o good-for-nothing.  
When I speak and advise you, o foolish one,  
For advice is a duty in order to elevate the community.  
The Lord of all mortals has forbidden us that  
which is easy  
In his court, and [that] ruling is the source of [all]  
wisdom ...*

This strand of *zajal* production, represented most notably by al-Najjar, was a continuation and extension of the medieval sub-genre of *zajal* known to medieval scholars as *mukaffir* which took as its subject matter *akhlag* (morals). But *mukaffir* was redefined by its late 19th-century practitioners to articulate concerns about the moral bases of modern Egyptian society. These writers express a concern that the state of the nation may be linked to a perceived disintegration of the moral foundations of Islamic society, and they speculate that this in turn has encouraged and aided the foreign incursion. These, of course, were concerns expressed widely by intellectuals of the time. However, their expression in colloquial poetry implies a desire for an audience broader than that of the intellectuals who were asking these questions in their own writings. And such poems are interesting, as noted, as documents of social history because, rather than relying on abstract formulations, they treat these issues in the immediate description of everyday experience.

Thus, when Mahmud Ramzi Nazim founded *Abu Qirdan* three decades after *al-Arghul*, and *Himarat Muniyati* had appeared, he was joining a well-established tradition. In the periodicals of the 1920's, however, we begin to see a broader stratum of contributors. In the late 19th-century periodicals, those poets writing in - or at least those whose poems were accepted for publication - are mostly civil servants, upper-level students, and teachers, whether in the government schools or at al-Azhar. In the 1920's, while these identifications continue to predominate, there are some cases which do not fall into this category. For example, in the third volume (1923) of the magazine *al-Nil* (The Nile, f. 1921) we find three poems published pseudonymously. This in itself was a common practice; well-known

poets had their own (known) pseudonyms, but readers contributing also used pseudonyms. While this is a feature which is frustrating for the researcher, it is also interesting in the choice and range of pseudonyms and their significance to the poems below with which they appear. One of the pseudonymous *al-Nil* poems is signed "Fallah" (A peasant); the other two are signed "*Muzzari*" (A Cultivator). The poem contributed by the "Fallah" is entitled "Three Long Years, O Cotton."<sup>7</sup> After noting how hard he has always worked to till the land, the narrator complains of rising prices, bad crops, and drought. This poem is interesting for its diction, which is heavily rural, and for its form, which is uneven and irregular in meter. It is not a very good poem, but it is an interesting one. It suggests the authorship of someone not well versed in the techniques of *zajal* which al-Najjar had preached. At the same time, however, one cannot assume that this was composed by a tiller of the land. Possibly, it was composed by someone with rural roots and proximity to Delta agriculture, perhaps a farmer's offspring who had a modicum of education. Interestingly, the two pieces by the "*Muzzari*"<sup>8</sup> are more regular in form, contain classical usages, and link the economic situation for agriculturalists to the fortunes of the banks in Cairo, complaining that people should be putting their money into Bank Misr, recently formed by Tal'at Harb, rather than into foreign banks. The two poems show a much broader vision than does that of the "Fallah"; the "*Muzzari*," interestingly, is obviously concerned about the disposition of capital. These poems together illustrate the intriguing question of who these readers and writers were. They suggest that colloquial poetry could become a means of voicing one's opinion from outside the circles of the highly educated urban elite - and certainly to an audience beyond the elite. There appears to have been a greater democratization in *zajal* publication during this period, linked both to the demands of a thriving and hungry press and to certain ideological trends of the time. The increase in literacy and in educational opportunities may have had an influence. The expansion of the press into new areas was important, too. The emerging labor-oriented press of the 1920's and 1930's, for example, drew upon *zajal* sent in by readers to inform workers of their rights and to exhort them to actively demand and protect those rights.

The expansion of *zajal* in the press over the 1920's may also have been encouraged by an important, if short-lived, development in attitudes to language among certain writers and intellectuals. At the end of the 19th century, those who were using colloquial modes of expression in the press were doing this explicitly as a means to an end, an instrument of education. This continued to be true, but it was in the 1920's that the language issue came up in a new way, in the context of developments in national culture and national ideology. In this period, the Egyptianist trend of cultural nationalism developed with implications for, and influences from, politically-oriented nationalism. This was an outlook which stressed Egypt's uniqueness and its separation from the rest of the Arabic-speaking



and Islamic world, although in most cases such a position did not actually take this notion of separation to its logical conclusion. Egyptianists emphasized the Pharaonic heritage as an integral part of Egypt's contemporary culture. Their call was given impetus by discoveries such as that of Tutankhamun's tomb - a popular subject among both *zajal* poets and *fusha* poets of the early 1920's. Not surprisingly, it was at this time that fiction writers began to experiment with colloquial language, not as an educative tool but rather as an artistic technique and an outgrowth of a burgeoning interest in realism. The notion that some issues might be more realistically and powerfully addressed in dialogue and imagery based partly on colloquial rather than entirely on classical Arabic was part of the call for a national literature which would articulate Egyptian experience.

*Zajal*, as an already established colloquial art, was in a sense separate from this experimentation. However, it may have benefited from this brief surge of interest in the literary utilization of colloquial Arabic. It was in this period that *zajal* publication expanded from the satirical-humorous press to the more mainstream, serious press; we find colloquial poetry appearing in a wider range of periodicals from this time on.

The interest of mainstream writers in colloquial Arabic as a language of literary expression waned in the 1930's and 1940's, in tandem with the greater emphasis on Arabism and Islamism, as opposed to Egyptianism, and therefore greater attention to the ideological importance of classical Arabic as an expression and a tool of pan-Arab unity. However, *zajal* had become rooted in public discourse by this time, and it did not budge. Probably the fact that it was, after all, a long-established art which had existed prior to the interest in colloquial Arabic among the intelligentsia, helped in protecting it from extinction under the pan-Arab banner.

#### Notes

1. By "elite" is meant here very generally those with more than a minimum education - with and education which would give them access to the learned culture, in classical Arabic, of the society, and with the economic means to participate in public cultural activity.
2. This research, which focused on the period 1880-1940, was made possible by a National Endowment for the Humanities/American Research Center in Egypt postdoctoral fellowship.
3. Our first preserved collection of *zajal* texts is the 12th-century A.D. *diwan* of Abu Bakr b. Quzman (d. 550/1155 or 555/1160). The origins of this form are a matter of controversy; the debate has centered on whether Andalusian *zajal* is based on quantitative Arabic meter or Romance/Hispanic syllabic/accental meter. The question of origin is also tied into the relationship of *zajal* to *muwashshah*, a stanzaic form of Arabic poetry composed in *fusha*. *Zajal* was defined by medieval scholars as one of the seven arts of Arabic poetry, which were usually classified as *gasida*, *muwashshah*, *dubayt* (all composed traditionally in *fusha* and inflected), *kan wa-kan*, *guma*, *mawwal* and *zajal* composed in colloquial Arabic. *Zajal*

was always stanzaic and followed certain rhyme patterns. In turn, it was divided into sub-genres depending on the *aghrad* or the thematic intentions, of each poem. On the early history of *zajal*, see Samuel Stern, *Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry* (Oxford, 1974); 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Ahwani, *Al-Zajal fi al-Andalus* (Cairo, 1957); T.J. Gorton, "The *diwan* of Ibn Quzman of Cordoba: A Metrical Study and Complete Critical Edition" (D. Phil. Diss., Oxford, 1976). One of the major medieval treatises on Arabic colloquial poetry is that of Safi al-Din al-Hilli; see the critical edition by Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Die Vulgararabische Poetik al-Kitab al-'Atil-Hali wa'l-Murahhas al-ghali des Safiyiddin Hilli* (Weisbaden, 1956).

4. This poem, originally published in *Abu Nazzara Zarga* vol. VII no. 7, is reprinted in Ibrahim 'Abduh, *Abu Nazzara: Imam al-sahafa al-fukahiyya al-musawwara wa-za'im al-masrah fi Misr, 1839-1912* (Cairo, 1953), pp. 159-160.
5. [Anon.], "Shukr lil-Himara wa-shakwa min al-zaman" (A Thank-you to the *Himara* and a Complaint on the Times), *Himarat Munyati* vol. II, no. 6 (12 Dhu al-Qa'da 1316), pp. 89-91.
6. Husayn Mazlum Riyad and Mustafa Muhammad al-Sabahi, *Tarikh Adab al-Sha'b: Nash'atuhu, Tatawwuruhi, A'lamuhu* (Cairo, 1936), p. 124.
7. [Anon.], "Zajal al-Argul fi li'b al-qumar" (Al-Argul's Poem on Gambling), *al-Argul*, vol. VI, no. 8 (1319; no month given), pp. 133-136.
8. "Fallah," "Thalatha sinin ya qutn tuwal," (Three Long Years, O Cotton), *al-Nil* vol. III, no. 118 (21 April 1923), p. 3. *Tuwal* may be a shortened form of the colloquial *tawwali* which would give the meaning of "three years straight." The use of a pl. form modifying *sinin* is unusual, as is placement of the adjective; the f.s. *tawila* placed after *sinin* would be more common. On the other hand, since this poem, like many of the colloquial poems in this magazine and others, appears under a title couched in *fusha* diction (thus, *thalatha sinin* rather than *talat sinin*), use of the colloquial *tawwali* would be unusual.
9. "Muzari," "Ya qutn Misr anta al-mashhur," (O Cotton of Egypt, You are the Famous [One]), *al-Nil* vol. III, no. 141 (29 Sept. 1923), p. 15; and "Nida' al-fallah fi alghayt" (The call of the Peasant in the Field), *al-Nil*, vol. III, no. 145 (27 Oct. 1923), p. 15.

## AWAKE SHAHRAZADE!

### An Egyptian 'Ammiyya Poet and Her Works

CLARISSA CHAPMAN BURT

**Editor's note:** Clarissa Chapman Burt, a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago, was a 1986-87 ARCE Research Fellow. She is continuing her research on Pre-Islamic Poetics during 1987-88 as a Fulbright-Hays Fellow affiliated with ARCE. She has a keen interest in 'Ammiyya poetry.

In the last several years academic interest in the West has turned to the phenomena associated with the "Islamic Resurgence" in many areas of the Arab World, and not the least in areas of great Western influence such as Egypt. At the same time, Western attention has also focused on modern literary trends in Arabic culture, including the dialectic between literature written in *Fusha* and the emerging and highly embattled proponents of literature written in 'Ammiyya. It is worth our while to examine some of this work for ourselves, for it seems that 'Ammiyya is capable of being a popular vehicle in a way that may be unobtainable to the more elitist *Fusha*.

I would like to introduce here two poems by Najwa al-Sayyid, an Alexandrian poet who writes exclusively in 'Ammiyya. Najwa may not be representative of Egyptian 'Ammiyya literature on the whole, but she certainly experiences the problems of 'Ammiyya writers in the context of the litero-social phenomenon of institutionalized diglossia in Egypt. Najwa is unusual in that she is among the few women who publicly present 'Ammiyya works, and perhaps even more unusual within that minority in that she dons and professes the "Islamic" veil. She is proud to claim that she was among the first of Alexandrian women to don the veil over ten years ago.

In her work, Najwa has combined her concerns about the modern Egypt, its roots in ancient tradition, and her vision of the role of women in that particular interplay. I met Najwa al-Sayyid in 1985 in Cairo and later in her home in Alexandria, and was struck as much by her story as by her poems. She seemed to me a peculiar combination of Islamic fundamentalism, feminist awareness (if I may apply a Western frame of reference), and Egyptian *wataniyya* which bore up to further scrutiny. It became apparent that I could not base a judgment on a preformed conception of what Islamic fundamentalism means, or of the state of women in Egyptian society. There is no retreat from the world here. Najwa gave me her kind permission to publish and translate these poems, which are among a collection which she expected to publish in Cairo in 1986, but like many 'Ammiyya poets, her collection of poems has inexplicably been stalled in the publishing house after the original agreement had been made. Najwa has presented these particular poems publicly in poetry

contests and radio broadcasts. "Shahrazade" won third place in a national poetry contest arranged by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture held in Dumyat in 1984. "Arusat an-Nil" is one Najwa's personal favorites, expressing her love and longing for her home while sojourning in Saudi Arabia with her husband. In 1987 Najwa's most recent work was used as poetic script for holiday specials on television and radio. She hopes to break into the song-writers' market, the one sure means that 'Ammiyya works can be made available to the larger public (which seems to me an unfortunate limitation on talent).

"Shahrazade" may profitably be compared to some of Anne Sexton's *Transformations* of fairytales from the 1970's, for it transforms a traditional story into an experience of urgent identification of the protagonist's fate with that of women and the community as a whole. Najwa calls both to women and to the whole community to awaken to their collective fate, shake off their complacency, and to wrestle with it fortified by the energies and longing -- the stories -- of the whole community.

I have preserved Najwa's spelling from the manuscript copies that she gave me, and have indicated vowels where I fear ambiguity may hinder the flow of the poems. There is little doubt that these poems are at their best in oral presentation, and that the translations exhibit all the shortcomings of attempts to transfer the richness of sounds and melody inherent in good oral recitation. The written texts of the poems in Egyptian 'Ammiyya are, nonetheless, self-contained pieces of Najwa's art. I hope my translations, while leaving a great deal to be desired, give some flavor of the original.

شهرزاد

ولفينا انا وانت

وخلينا ولا حته

وادينا رجعنا بالحكايات

خدي إحكى يا شهرزاد تولى

ويسمع شهریار قولك

بطول ليلك

يطول عمرك في كل نهار

وتاني تلف ونجيبك كتير حكايات

مشان ماتعيشي فوق الألف بالألف



but for the guards, it cannot reach.  
We beat on the door til our palms run blood,  
but the watchmen's heart cares not.

Who set the guard on the door to turn us away?  
No dolt of guards can stop us til dawn glimmers  
nor is sunk the ship of arrival's hope -  
we'll enter Moon two hearts and come out light  
to reach you by window  
and beside you turn back two hearts

We did the rounds, and aah, we're come  
Where are the guards to keep us away?  
while at heart the stories hatching  
and pecking at the walls  
Give us our hands, extend them  
and from now on attend them  
as each story comes out to you, take it Shahr, tell it,  
the sword will sleep and not waken.  
But oh, you,  
all our stories spread on your breast...you didn't speak  
but on a floor of silk did you sleep  
Shahr, awake  
behind the window Moon waits to be sure he may go  
and is going,  
Wake up, Shahr  
look in the eye of our stories -  
you'll find a lifetime there  
Wake up, Shahr  
Get up, Shahr  
Tell, Shahr

Shahr, awake!  
Shahr, awake!  
Shahr, awake!

The few things I would like to remark about this poem are minor notes to my reading. The placing of a story fragment within the course of the poem that is a story itself strengthens the relationship of the poem with *One Thousand and One Nights*, with its complex layering of stories within stories. Moreover, the reflection of the sleeping Lady Fair in the sleeping Shahrazade makes the fragment an encapsulation or microcosm of the larger poem. Linguistically, note the identification of "bolt" with "dolt" in the word *qifl* - what fortunate phonetic correspondences in English!

When she shared the second poem with me, Najwa was careful to explain the original myth of the bride of the Nile,<sup>1</sup> who was supposedly tossed into the rising river in hopes of bringing a good flood season to the agricultural lands. It disturbed me, then, to find that Najwa would identify the speaker in the poem with the virgin, thinking hers a horrible fate, until I realized how thoroughly Najwa and the High Dam have changed the relationship of the bride and the river -- and forever.

ورا الشباك قمر مستني يطمئن عشان يمشي  
وراح يمشي  
يا شهر إصحي  
وطلي ف عین حکایاتنا  
تلاقي العمر جواها  
واصحي يا شهر  
قومي يا شهر  
إحكي يا شهر

يا شهر إصحي  
يا شهر إصحي  
يا شهر إصحي

### Shahrazade

We roamed about, you and I,  
leaving no place untouched,  
and here we have brought back stories -  
Take, Shahrazade, tell them, speak,  
and Shahriyar will listen to your say  
all your night long,  
and lengthen your life with every day,  
and again we'll gather and bring you stories,  
so you can live beyond the thousand, by thousands.

And so we're on the road -  
we enter night - looking round for letters  
we heap them up - we love them into each other - a word  
lives  
we warm it with heartthrob, we guard it - so a story will  
hatch  
we warm them with heartthrob, we guard them - to hatch  
stories,  
we're bringing them to you, Shahrazade.  
Here we are on the road,  
we bid Moon not leave, but at your window stand guard,  
while we gather your stories, Sharazade.

Once upon a time  
Hassan Shatir, a knight on a white steed  
enters the Ghoul's castle  
to retrieve the Lady Fair on his horse,  
but Lady Fair dozes unaware  
the anxious Shatir calls  
while Lady Fair is sinking into deepest sleep...

We locked our hearts o'er the stories and came to you,  
but a bolt of watchmen stand on your doorstep  
not letting us by to enter unto you  
not wanting to call you  
so we lift our voice so it reaches past the clouds,

وادينا ع الطريق ماشيين  
نخش الليل - ندور ع الحروف جواه  
نللمها - نحبيها في بعضيها - تميش كلمه  
ندفيها بنبض القلب نحبيها - عشان تنفخ لنا حكاية  
ندفيها بنبض القلب نحبيها - عشان تنفخ لنا حكايات  
نحبيها يا شهرزاد ليكي  
وادينا ع الطريق ماشيين  
نوصي القمره ماتنبيشي وتفضل حارسه شبائك  
وبنجمع حكاياتك

وكان ياما كان  
حسن شاطر وفارس فوق حصان أبيض  
بيدخل جوه قصر الغول  
عشان يرجع بست الحسن فوق فرسه  
وست الحسن نعبانه ولا تدري

ينادي الشاطر المهموم  
وست الحسن غرقانه في عز النوم

قفلنا قلوبنا ع الحكايات وجينالك  
وقفل من الحرس واقف على بابك  
لاهم فايتمنا ندخلك

ولا عايزين ينادوكي  
ونرفع صوتنا حتى يعدي م السحابات  
لكن مايعدي م الحراس  
نخط بالكفوف حتى يسيل الدم  
ولا قلب البحرس يهتم

ومين وصي الحرس ع الباب يفوتونا  
لا قفل من الحرس يقدر يوقفنا لحد الفجر مايشقشق  
ولا أمل الوصول مركبته راح تغرق  
هندخل في القمر قلبين ونخرج نور  
يعدي لك من الشباك  
وجنبتك راح يعود قلبين

ولفينا وأه جينا  
وفين حراس يحوشونا  
وجوه القلب لسه بتنفخ الحكايات  
وبتنقر على الجدران  
وهاتي اديكي مديها  
رم اللظه دي حنيها  
وكل حكاية تخرج لك - خديها يا شهر واحكيها  
بنام السيف ولا يصحي  
واه إنت

نرشت كل حكاياتنا على صدرك .. ولا قولت  
وفوق أرض الحرير نمت  
يا شهر إصحي

وكان تويي نهار والشمس على صدره  
وكان تاجي نجوم بتزف قمرايا  
وكانت طرحتي طارحه فرح وزهور  
وكان العقد حباته قلوب م النور  
ولما دخلت قلب النيل

قفل بابه وخبانني  
وخدني معاه ولفغني ووراني  
وانا باقطف في نبضاتي باعمل صحبه علشانه  
ولما الرحله نادتنا  
شالتنا اللهفه وجابتنا  
ولحظة مالتقيت بالقطن والقمح  
جري نبضي مراكب تنقله الدمعات  
لشط حنين

يشوفها النيل يفيض دمعاه على الجانبين  
ما تعطش حبه وسط الطين  
ولما تشح دمعات

تخطي الرحله وتنادي عشان نرجع  
نعبتي القلب طول الوقت نبض حزين  
ونملا العين عصير صبار  
ولما القلب يتعبني  
تخطي الرحله وتنادي

وينجي نروح  
وينجي نروح

لأتمه وشمرنا الأسود بنطلب منه مايوتشي  
وأتمه حنة الكفين حتنقش فرحه ماتضمشي  
ولحظه وقفنا طلينا

بعتنا الخوف يشيل م الرحله اسامينا  
ماعادش النبض يقدر يرجع المشوار على عينه  
ماعادش الصبر يقدر يخلع الاشواك بكفينه  
وده المشوار بيطرح ليل نهار اشواك  
وانا لا خطبني النيل

قرئت كتبه  
عرفت انه

في يوم فرحه يزيد ويفيض  
واديني جيت

عشان القمح ويا القطن مايشربش دمع حزين  
عشان اللقمه ماتبقي بطعم المر والصبار  
ولا تدبش طلة زهرة النوار  
ودي المره  
اشوف النيل



يدوق لقمه من القمحات  
وعينه مش علي الرحله  
ولا يتملي عب العيال بالقطن  
يعمي قلبه فرح كثير  
يفيض قلبه من الفرحه على الجانبين  
ماتعطش حب وسط الطين  
يفني القطن للقمحات

### Bride of the Nile

My dress was daytime, the sun upon its breast  
my crown was stars processing my two moons to fest  
my veil was flinging flowers and delight  
my necklace string had beads with cores of light  
And when I entered Nile's upheaving core  
He hid me there, locked the door  
and took me with him, wrapped me, showed the way  
I, plucking heartbeats to make him a bouquet  
So when the Journey called us  
Grief lifted us and brought us,  
and the moment I met cotton and wheat crops,  
my pulse ran ships ferried by teardrops  
to a Yearning shore,  
which Nile saw and poured forth his tearshed on the ba  
where thirsts a seed amidst the clay.  
When his teardrops seep away  
Journey steps it up and calls us back away  
to fill our heart along with saddened pulse  
and fill our eyes with bitter cactus juice  
And so when the heart fills  
Journey steps it up and calls  
we come and go  
we come and go  
until when? our black hair will we beg not to die  
and when will two palms' henna daub an unlost joy?<sup>2</sup>  
Once we stopped and looked  
and sent Fear to lift our names from Journey  
Pulse no longer can come back the errand at eye risk  
Patience can no longer pluck the thorns from his  
two palms,  
and that errand yields thorns night and day.  
when Nile bid my troth  
I read his books  
I knew he would  
on his wedding day increase and flood  
and lo I came  
so wheat and cotton would not drink sad flow  
so the morsel would not be bitter tasting or aloe  
nor wither flower bud's dewdrop.  
I see the Nile this time  
taste mouthful of golden wheat  
His eye not on the Journey's beat  
When cotton fills the children's bags at chest

great joy fills his breast  
his heart floods with joy on both sides,  
thirsts not the seed amidst the clay,  
the cotton singing to the grain.

It should be noted that the idea of an unavoidable journey is common in 'Ammiyya poems. To take an example from the Egyptian theater, an arena in which 'Ammiyya poetry appears with greater frequency than in official poetic circles, *Min 'Ayn 'Ajeeb Nas*, by Najeeb Sa-roor, also focuses on a grievous Nile journey to a different end. Najwa has taken remarkably common images in these two poems -- folklore in every sense of the word -- and has transformed them to her own purposes and mes-sage. The word for "bouquet" in this poem, *suhba*, also means "company," creating a double meaning or nuance in the line "...to keep him company." Najwa uses sound cor-respondences throughout her poems, but specific rhyme seems more incidental than programmed. We should note the "rootplay" between *sabar*, "cactus, aloe," and *sabr*, "patience," which emphasizes the tension which Najwa has drawn between the bitterness and harshness of Journey, and the long enduring patience of the river and man until a true marriage is made between them, and the wedding joy is complete and endures.

Najwa's art rests squarely on the characteristics of 'Ammiyya, for her particular music and pleasing phonetic qualities could not be reproduced in *Fusha*. They are dif-ferent media, and the one cannot be substituted for the other. It is of greatest importance, I believe, to listen to the voices of the contemporary poets in Egypt, both in and without the official circles, to attend to and recognize the new currents in Egyptian literature. Najwa al-Sayyid and her poems are just one example of a wealth of literary ac-tivity given little credit or recognition by establishment cir-cles which form the primary basis for Western contact with Arabic literatures.

### Notes

1. Cf. Edward Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (New York: Everyman Library, Dutton, 1966) p. 500-1. Also note the correspondences between this myth and the story of Iphigenia, who was dressed in her marriage garb, expecting to go to her wed-ding, but who was slaughtered by her father, Agememnon, so Artemis would *control the sea* for the Greeks' journey to Troy. Cf. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York: Mentor Books, 1954) p. 182.
2. Before the actual marriage ceremony by a period determined by custom (varying from a week to a day) the Egyptian bride (and originally the groom) had henna applied to her hands and feet, ini-tiating the joyous festivities associated with the wedding. This cus-tom endures, though to a lesser degree, even in modern Cairo.

## COMPARATIVE VIEWS OF EGYPT

BARRY IVERSON

Captions by Nihal Tamraz and Barry Iverson

**Editor's Note:** Barry Iverson, an American, moved with his par-ents to Alexandria in 1965, where he lived for five years. After completing secondary school in Norway and Switzerland, he re-turned to the United States to pursue an undergraduate degree in journalism at the University of Colorado. After a brief teaching post in England, he moved back to Egypt in 1980 as a free-lance photojournalist and began working for *Time* in 1981. In 1982 Iverson was severely wounded near Sidon while cover-ing the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon. After a three-year conva-lescence in Boston, Iverson returned to Cairo in 1985 for *Time*. That year he was also awarded a Fulbright Grant to research the history of photography in 19th century Egypt. Iverson now resides in Cairo where he covers the Middle East for *Time* and continues his work on the Rephotographic Survey of Egypt.

Three comparisons appear in this issue with three more sched-uled for the next *NARCE*. Captions identifying the sites and commenting on the photographs follow the photograph pages.

The Rephotographic Survey of Egypt (RSE) began in 1983 with the following aims: 1) employing black and white rephotography as a comparative methodology to survey several distinct subject areas; 2) chronicling the de-velopment of photography in Egypt from 1839-1900; 3) analysis of the changes evident in the 19th and 20th cen-tury visual documents.

After two seasons of fieldwork, together with my as-sistant, Nihal Tamraz, graduate student in Islamic Art and Architecture, the RSE has successfully replicated more than 120 sites photographed by 19th century photogra-phemers. The majority of these are Islamic sites in Cairo, with a smaller portion being Pharaonic sites as far south as the Meidum Pyramid, various 19th century buildings and street scenes in Cairo and Alexandria, and scenes in the Sinai.

Phase II will encompass rephotographic fieldwork in Upper Egypt, edifices and villages along the Nile, and the oases. In addition, archival research is ongoing at several archives and institutes.

I would like to thank the Fulbright Commission for sponsoring, in part, Phase I of this work. Also, thanks to Dr. Ahmed Kadry, Dr. Wafa as-Siddiq, and others of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization who offered encour-agement and granted necessary permits. Finally, my thanks to ARCE for support in Phase II of the project.

### Cover Illustration: (UNTITLED) CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE, ALEXANDRIA

Photographer unknown, Albumen print, c. 1870s  
Photograph courtesy of the Prints & Photographs Division,  
Library of Congress

Obelisk, derived from "obeliskos," a Greek diminutive meaning "a spit." The origin of "Cleopatra's Needles" had

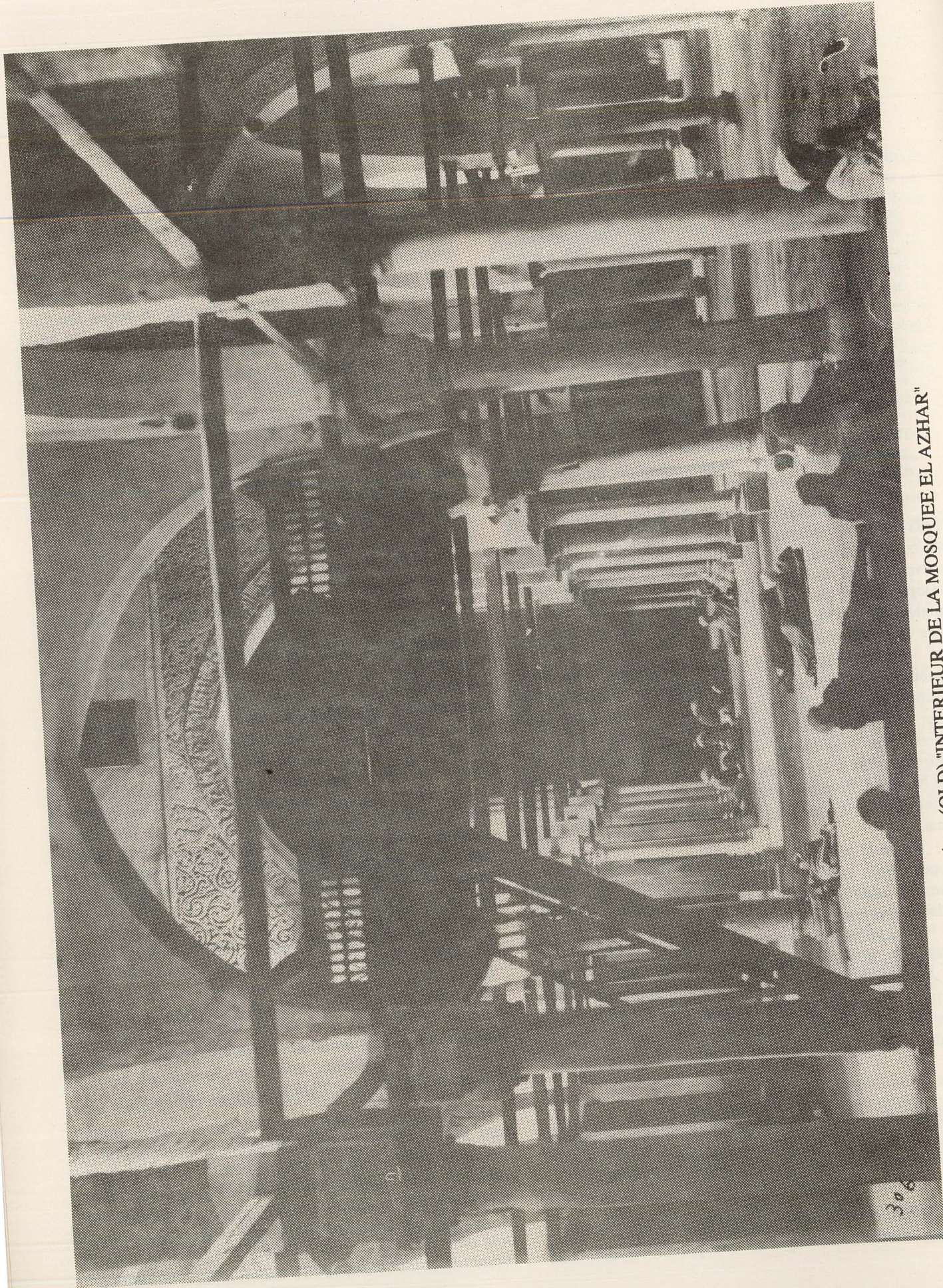
little to do with Cleopatra of Alexandria. Cut from the granite quarries of Aswan, the twin obelisks were erected around B.C. 1500 in Heliopolis, by the XVIIIth dynasty pharaoh Tuthmosis III, a prodigious builder domestically and regionally. In B.C. 13, they were removed to Alexan-dria by the Roman engineer Pontius, to adorn the Cae-sareum, a temple built by Cleopatra in honor of Mark Antony. One of the obelisks was removed to the banks of the Thames in 1877, and the other was removed to New York's Central Park in 1880.

The New York (destined) obelisk lay in a pitiful con-dition during the 19th century, as described by Henry Gor-ringe. "Something more than curiosity was needed to in-duce one to approach near enough and remain long enough to examine and appreciate it. Situated in the out-skirts of the city, near the Ramleh railway depot, it was a familiar object to the foreign element, many of whom live at Ramleh and passed it twice, often four times a day; and yet no one deemed it worthy of protection and care, even to the extent of preventing its defacement and the accu-mulation of offal around it. Two men made a business of breaking pieces from the angle of the shaft and edges of the intaglios for sale to relic hunters. The disagreeable odors and clamors for backsheesh hastened the departure of strangers, who rarely devoted more than a few seconds to its examination . . . The constant washings of the surf had begun to affect the foundation, and for the last fifteen years the obelisk has been gradually inclining more and more toward the sea. In a few years it must have fall, and almost certainly have been broken in the fall. But a more ignoble fate threatened it, in the proposition of some of the foreign residents of Alexandria to erect an apartment-house on the adjacent ground around the obelisk, which was to adorn the court-yard."

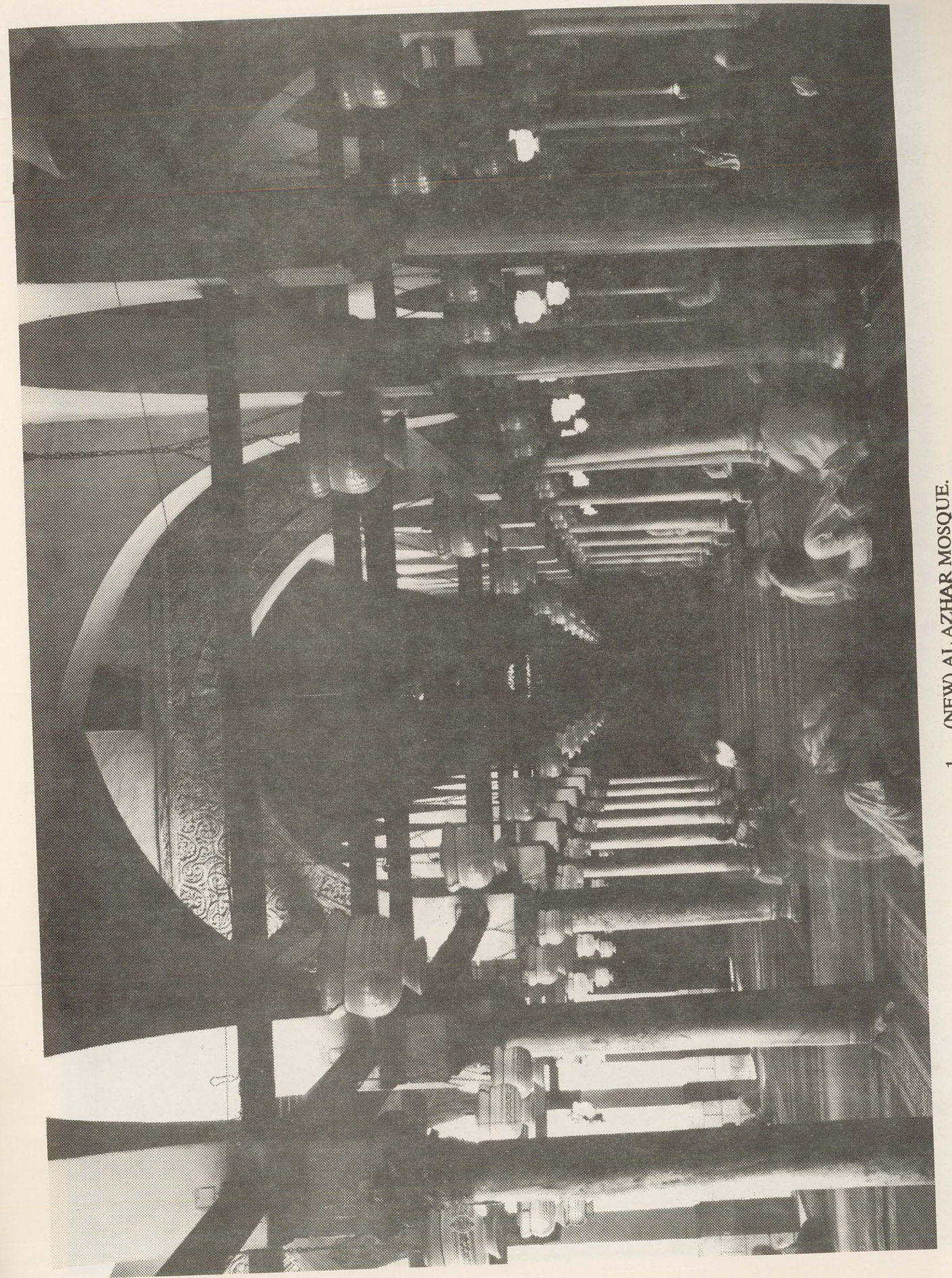
After lengthy negotiations between Khedive Isma'il, the ruler of Egypt, and various private and public Ameri-can citizens, the obelisk was removed from Alexandria in 1880. The chief financier behind the scheme was William H. Vanderbilt. A steamer named "Dessug" was purchased, and altered to accommodate the mammoth block of stone. After several accidents and near-disaster at sea, the Dessug arrived in New York on July 20, 1880.

Gorringe wrote of transporting the obelisk's pedestal, "this stone is the largest and heaviest ever moved on wheels of which there is any record, and excepting the obelisk it is the largest ever moved through New York." To an audience of 10,000, it was re-erected in Central Park on January 22, 1881, for the third and final time. From then until the present day, environmental factors have in-flicted serious deterioration to the monument's exterior.



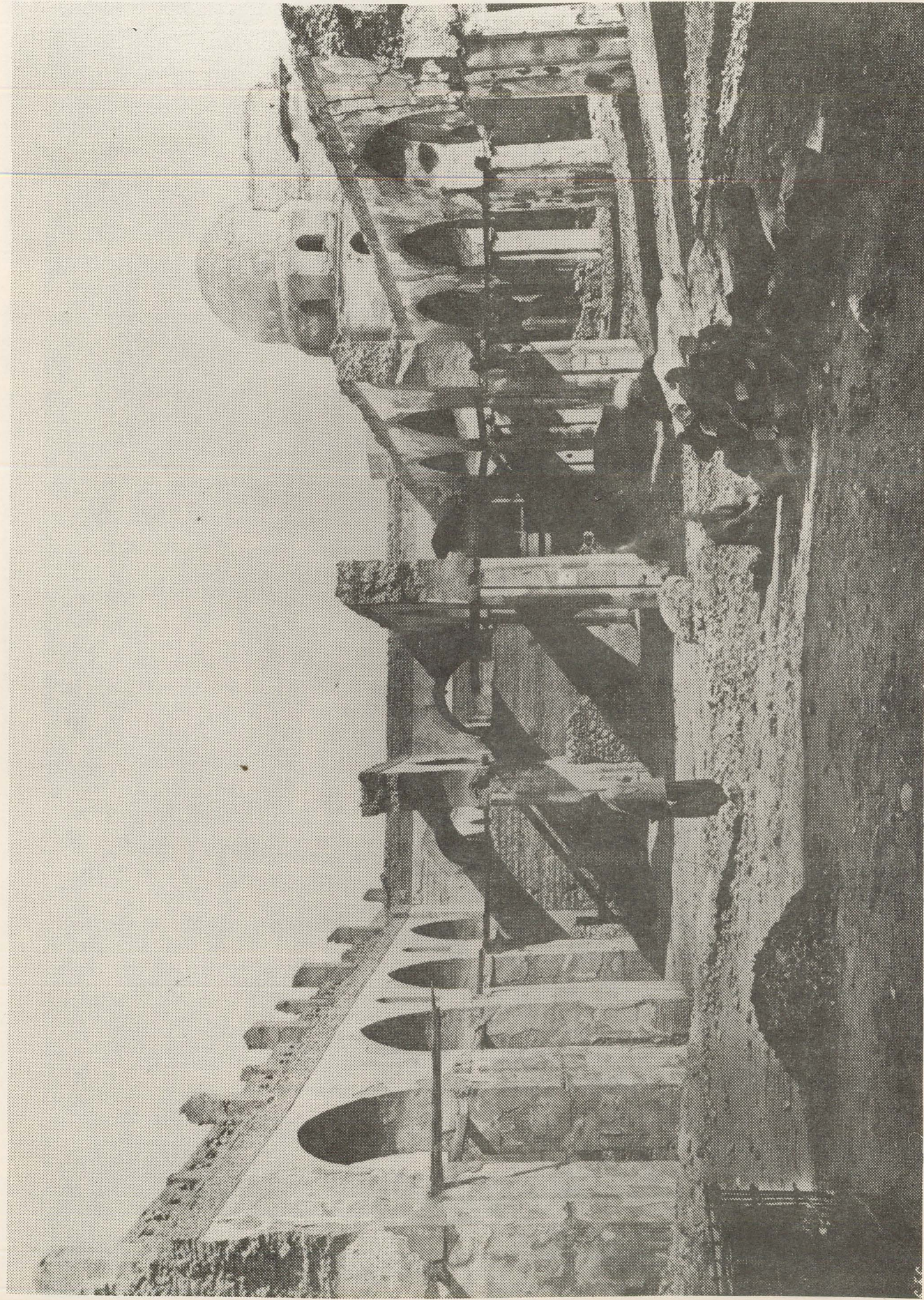


1. (OLD) "INTERIEUR DE LA MOSQUEE EL AZHAR"

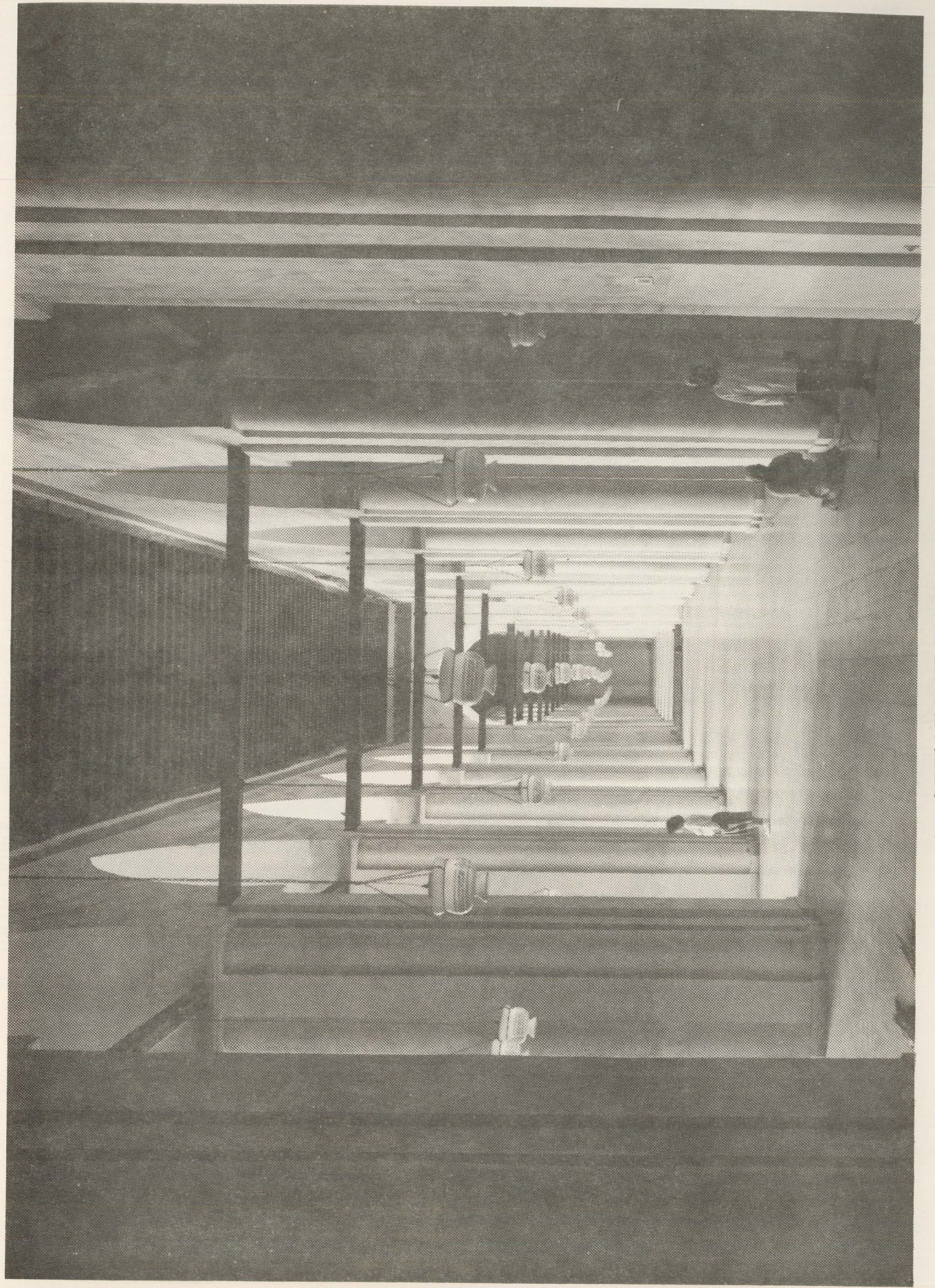


1. (NEW) AL AZHAR MOSQUE.



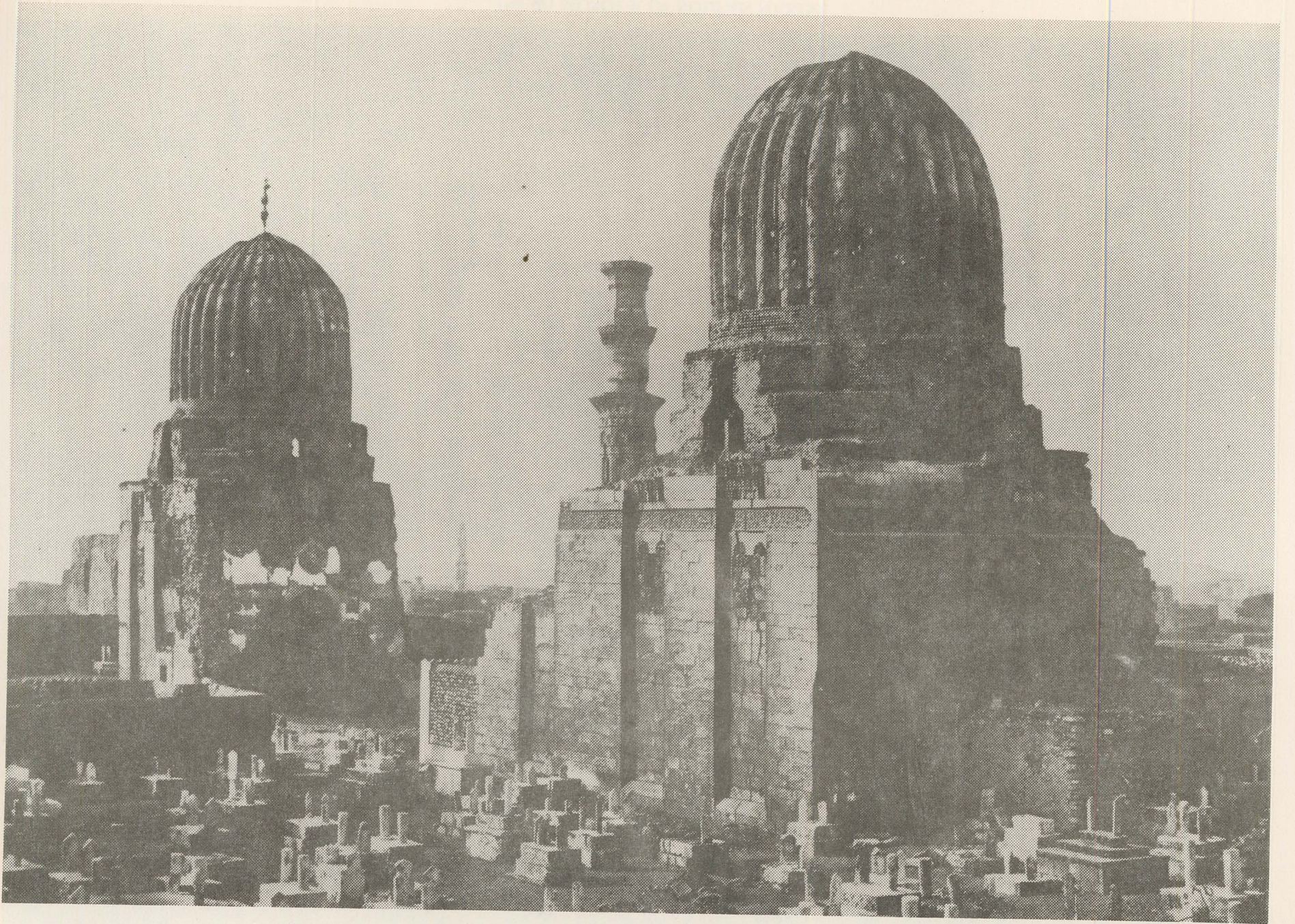


2. (OLD) "MOSQUE OF SULTAN HAKIM"



2. (NEW) MOSQUE OF SULTAN HAKIM.





3. (OLD) "CAIRO, TOMBS IN THE SOUTHERN CEMETERY, SECOND VIEW"



3. (NEW) CAIRO: TOMBS IN THE SOUTHERN CEMETERY.



1. Forster, E.M. *Alexandria: A History and A Guide*. Alexandria: Whitehead Morris Limited, 1922.
2. Gorringer, Honeychurch Henry. *Egyptian Obelisks*. NY: H. H. Gorringer, 1882.
3. Griffith, Francis Llewellyn. Section titled, "Obelisk," *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, V. 14, New York, 1911, 11th edition.
4. Habachi, Labib. *The Obelisks of Egypt: Skyscrapers of the Past*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1984.
5. *Precis D'Histoire Ancienne de L'Egypte*. Le Caire: College Saint-Joseph, 1944, 3me edition.

### "INTERIEUR DE LA MOSQUEE EL AZHAR"

Photograph by Pascal Sebah, ca. 1870s  
Albumen print, signed in the negative  
Collection of Barry Iverson

Photograph by Barry Iverson, 8 July 1986

The first mosque to be built by the Shi'i Fatimids was founded by Gawhar al-Siqilli in A.D. 970. Since its foundation, the mosque has remained the premier institution of Islamic theology in the Muslim world.

Al-Azhar has witnessed several additions and alterations through the centuries. The old photograph in the 1870s shows the original Fatimid stucco decoration on the spandrels of the arch and the dikka, the raised wooden platform from which the Sheikh recites the Qu'ran. The interior is well illuminated by light pouring in through the arcade.

In the approximately 120-year time span between the two photographs, few major alterations can be attested. A wooden mashrabiyya screen, which was added in the arcade dividing the court and the sanctuary, accounts for the darkness in the modern photograph. The dikka has disappeared in the short time span between the two pictures. The recent photograph was taken during prayer time, where the faithful now enjoy the luxury of the carpet covering the floor (notice the bare stone floor in the old photograph). Though Salah al-Din transformed Egypt from Shi'ism to Sunnism in the mid-thirteenth century, the Shi'i Bohra sect added the hanging electric lamps bearing the name of their Sultan, "Borhan al-Din", in the twentieth century.

### "MOSQUE OF SULTAN HAKIM"

Photograph from the "Frith's Series," ca. 1860  
Albumen print, written in the negative, and on the print surface  
Photograph courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division,  
Library of Congress

Photograph by Barry Iverson, February 1986

The mosque was completed in 1013. Compared to other Fatimid mosques, such as al-Azhar, the interior decoration is more subdued. However, like the mosque of Ibn Tulun, it is built of brick, plaster and piers as means of

support. The mosque has served various functions over the centuries: as a prison for the crusaders' captives, as a stable by Salah al-Din, as a warehouse by Napoleon, and as a boys' school in the Nasser Period<sup>1</sup>

The old photograph shows the fourth arcade of the sanctuary in a ruinous state. It is due to the surviving stucco inscription beneath the roof that the vantage point was identified. The dome over the mihrab was extant at that time.

The new photograph was taken after the recent mosque restoration undertaken by the Bohras, an Isma'ili Shi'i sect based in India. New piers were built, tie beams similar to the original surviving ones were installed, and the floor was paved with marble.

1. Richard B. Parker, Robin Sabin and Caroline Williams, *Islamic Monuments in Cairo: A Practical Guide* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 3rd edition, 1985), 221.

### "CAIRO, TOMBS IN THE SOUTHERN CEMETERY, SECOND VIEW"

Photograph by Francis Frith, 1857  
Albumen print, signed in the negative  
Photograph courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Photograph by Barry Iverson, 14 March 1986

The khanqah was built by Amir Qawsun in 1335 in the southern cemetery. Qawsun was one of the wealthy emirs of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad.

The twin mausolea as they appear in the old photograph were the limits of the qibla wall of the khanqah between which were the prayer mihrab and arcades<sup>2</sup> The prominent minaret between the domes is that of Badr al-Din al-Qarafi (1310). The smaller minaret to its left (still extant, but now obstructed in the modern view by a new minaret) is that of the mosque of Azdumur (ca. 16th century). The mausolea are surrounded by small individual tombs.

In the new photograph, in spite of the restoration work executed on the northern dome and nearby minaret, the disappearance of the southern dome has dominated the change in this pair of photographs. The land surrounding the surviving mausoleum has been sold in small pieces to individuals for the family "hawsh" where successive family members are buried. Moreover, because of the lack of land in the expanding metropolis, people now inhabit the cemetery amid the tombs.

2. Laila 'Ali Ibrahim, "The Khanqah of Emir Qawsun in Cairo," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* (1974), 37-64.

## MOVING BLOCKS IN MEMPHIS

MICHAEL JONES

**Editor's Note:** Michael Jones has a B.A. and an M.A. in Egyptology from Cambridge University. From 1982-1987 he was Field Director of the ARCE-sponsored New York University Excavations at the Embalming House of the Apis Bulls in Memphis. Jones is an ARCE Fellow for 1987-88.

This article is a description of the methods used by a group of Egyptian workmen to move some heavy alabaster blocks, the largest weighing an estimated two and a half tons, using only rudimentary equipment and their own physical strength. Their feat was not an attempt to recreate ancient technology. In the absence of modern machinery, the workmen themselves decided to move the blocks, unaided except for the simple equipment listed below. All stages of the operation were a result of their own ingenuity and expertise.

The five blocks in question are situated to the southeast of the Apis House in Memphis. In recent years the rising water table has encroached on the low lying parts of Memphis so that many monuments are permanently flooded: this group of blocks had begun to suffer seasonal inundation during January and February each year, and as a result were in danger of rapid decay. The work described here was part of the conservation and restoration program of the 1986 season of the New York University (IFA) Apis Expedition at Mit Rahinah.<sup>1</sup> The aspects of the work described here are limited to the raising of the blocks onto a waterproof concrete platform which had been constructed in the original location of the blocks, 1.0 meter higher than the surrounding ground level, so that they could be displayed without further deterioration. Details of their archaeological context and of the excavation under them will be discussed elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> The blocks include two inscribed pieces; one bears the names of Shoshenq I (945-924 B.C.), and the High Priest of Ptah, Shedsunefertem, and records the building of a *wobt* for the god Osiris-Apis. The other bears the names of Ramesses II and Living Apis. Both inscriptions have long been known to Egyptologists.<sup>3</sup>

The labor force was a total of ten men, two of whom also acted as foremen while working with the stones. The men were selected because of their previous experience with handling large and heavy stones, particularly at the excavation of the IFAO at the pyramid sites of South Saqqara. Some of these men have also worked in the Tura/Maasara limestone quarries during the months when foreign expeditions are not in the field. The work undertaken at Memphis and described here is by no means a unique undertaking in Egyptian archaeology. Nevertheless, the dexterity with which trained and experienced laborers can ease along a massive block, pivot it and turn it

within a limited space, and finally bring it to rest withing millimeters of a previously designated spot, is discussed among field archaeologists with awe and sometimes dismay, but rarely has the method been recorded.<sup>4</sup>

The workmen in our own case were very specific about the equipment they required to accomplish the task of moving and raising the blocks. The individual items were as follows:

1. Four wooden levers each 1.5m in length cut from timbers with 0.105 x 0.05m section. Purchased locally in el-Badrashein; LE 2.00 each.
2. Two wooden levers each 3.0m in length cut from timbers with 0.09 x 0.09 section. Purchased in el-Badrashein; LE 8.00 each.
3. One rope 12.0m in length. Purchased in el-Badrashein; LE 7.00.
4. Two iron crowbars 1.30 and 1.50m in length. Improvised from bars found discarded locally.
5. Two wooden planks 4.0m x 0.30m x 0.05m. Borrowed from the Antiquities Organization Inspectorate, Mit Rahinah.
6. Various small pieces of wood and stones used as props and supports while moving and balancing the blocks, collected locally.

In preparation for lifting the blocks onto the concrete platform the first task was to construct an earth ramp against the side of the platform adjacent to the area in which the blocks had been stored after removal from their original location. The gradient of the ramp was about 1 in 4, which was considered by the men to be appropriate for the size of the blocks and the distance they had to be moved.<sup>5</sup> The ramp, made of compacted earth,<sup>6</sup> was finished in about two hours, with three men filling baskets and three others passing them in a chain over a distance of about eight meters. The ramp rose in height as successive basket loads of earth were heaped upon it. It was not built as a sloping structure from the start, but as a sequence of superimposed and virtually horizontal layers. The workmen decided on the length of the lowest layer by pacing out a length four times the intended height of the ramp; each subsequent layer was somewhat shorter than the last until the top of the platform was reached.<sup>7</sup> The completed ramp was 4.5m long, 2.0m wide and its maximum height was 0.90m. The width at the top was little wider than the blocks which were to pass over it. The sides were banked up crudely, using only the natural slope formed as the



earth spilled out from the center when the ramp was under construction, and, in this way, the gradient held its shape while the men were at work hauling the blocks on it.

The first blocks to be moved into position were a pair at the north end of the assemblage, representing originally a single piece which had already broken roughly in half before the first records of the site were made. The ramp had therefore been formed against the northwest corner of the platform, running perpendicularly away on the west side. The blocks themselves were taken one by one. Each had to be positioned at the bottom of the ramp and facing directly onto it. This was accomplished by turning each block gradually using the two short levers placed under opposite sides of the block. First the block was lifted up on one side using the lever placed beneath the lower edge. While it was raised, small stones were placed as far under it as possible; the block was then set down on these stones. Next the other side was lifted in the same way until the lower edge of the first side touched the ground. As soon as this happened the men pushing down on the levers moved sideways and the block turned. In this way, alternately tilting one side and then the other, with a support under the block, the men maneuvered the first block to the bottom of the ramp, four meters away, in under an hour. The short levers used for this operation had been prepared by cutting out a wedge-shaped notch 25-30cm from the operational end. This enabled the block to be turned and held as it began to slip forward at the moment when the center of gravity began to shift.

Once the block had arrived at the bottom of the ramp the task was to drag it into position on the platform. Two wooden planks were laid longitudinally on the ramp, with sufficient distance between them so that the planks would be positioned beneath the edges of the block. Dry sand was sprinkled onto the surface of the planks. As the block was lifted onto the lower ends of the planks using the short levers, it was pivoted on small stones pushed underneath whenever it needed extra stability. Once positioned at the base of the ramp, the rope was wrapped twice around the length of the block; each end of the rope was manned by three or four laborers. The block was dragged over the sandy surface of the planks without rollers or additional

props beneath. As the rope-men pulled, so the lower end of the block was pushed from behind with the two levers, each lever was manned by two men (figure 1). The gradient of the ramp together with the sandy planks provided a surface inclined in such a way that the block would not slip backwards under its own weight. The light sprinkling of sand was replenished from time to time, and by the end of the first morning the two similar blocks forming the northern pair were in position on the platform.

Once the first two blocks were in position, the ramp had to be moved slightly to one side to allow the next blocks to be lifted. This was done by removing earth from one side and dumping it on the other, again in a series of fairly level surfaces abutting the existing part of the ramp. While one party of men was at work reorganizing the ramp, so the rest were set to getting the next blocks into position for dragging up to the platform top. The process of turning and moving the blocks was repeated as before; as before, these were two fragments of a single massive piece. The first of the second pair had to be turned over. To do so, the block was first positioned parallel with the bottom of the ramp, a little further than its own width away from the ends of the planks. Then, using two short levers under the side farthest from the ramp, the block was slowly jacked up on two very precarious piles of small stones placed under the two elevated corners. When it lay at an angle of about forty-five degrees, the rope was wrapped twice around the width of the block. Then the raising of the block continued and as it approached ninety degrees, final adjustments were made by positioning one rope-team behind the block to steady it as the other team hauled it upright (figure 2). The rope was then removed, and with a coordinated push, the block fell over perfectly lined up for its ascent of the ramp. The dragging of this piece and its companion were done in the same way as already described for the first pair. By the end of the second day, the second pair of stones was in position. The precision with which the two broken pieces were matched together on top of the platform is also worth noting, not least because each piece of alabaster weighs approximately one ton. After the stones had been placed fairly close together, the workmen were able to align the jagged edges

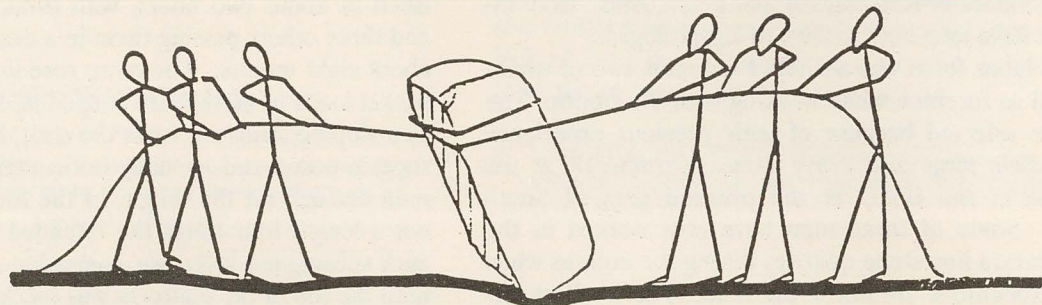


FIGURE I

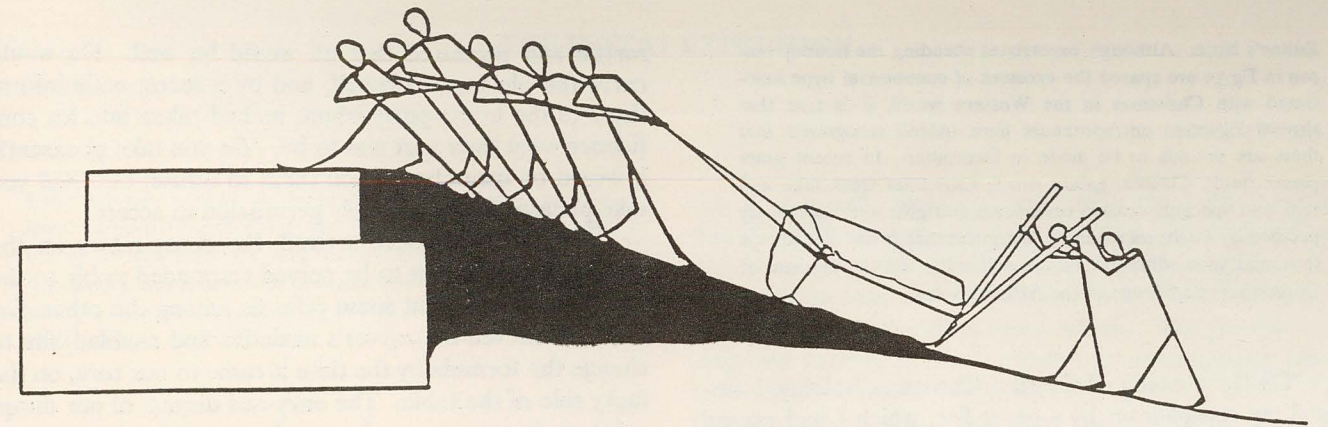


FIGURE II

where the crystalline stone had split by lifting them gently on the levers with small stones placed at the right distance from the ends to act as pivots, so that the two pieces rested together.

The largest and heaviest block was left until last. It is a single inscribed piece of alabaster 1.68 x 0.98 x 0.54m with an estimated weight of two and a half tons. The earth ramp was extended another stage as before. The block was actually too close to the platform. Therefore, in order to avoid moving the block backwards and forwards unnecessarily, the workmen lifted the end closest to the platform on two stacks of stones and extended the ramp under the block, piling in earth until there was enough to fill the wedge-shaped space between the ground and the lower surface of the block. The stacks of small stones under the corners which had been used to prop up the block were fully engulfed in the ramp. For this piece the 3.0m long levers were brought into use. Being longer they could accommodate up to four men on each, but for maximum efficiency only two men on each lever were necessary since with the pivot correctly placed the lifting capability of the longer arm was greater than that of the 1.5m levers.

Again the rope was wrapped twice around the length of the block. Men standing on the platform pulled the block forwards while it was eased on its way by two men on each of the long levers behind the back edge of the stone. There seemed to be a tendency with this heavier block to veer to one side or the other, possibly because of a stronger gang of haulers on the left or right. This movement was rectified on the ramp by men whose job was to jam the block with the shorter levers by placing them in and under the block at the sides near the rear when the men on the long levers lifted and pushed. The whole operation of hauling this block into position took eight hours, with not infrequent tea breaks. The hauling was done in bursts, timed by the chants of "Salah in Nabi,"

"Ismak Muhammad," those who were considered not to be pulling their weight were also invoked by their nicknames, "Ismak Qonfid!" ("your name is Hedgehog!").

#### Notes

1. The project is funded by the Dimick Foundation of Washington, D.C. and sponsored by the American Research Center in Egypt.
2. Preliminary excavations reports have been published in *JARCE* XIX (1983), and XXII (1985).
3. H. Brugsch, *ZAS* 16 (1878), 37-43; *Thesaurus* (1883), 817, 948-49.
4. One of the few detailed accounts of such work is that by Major A.H. Bagnold, R.E. 'Account of the Manner in which Two Colossal Statues of Rameses II at Memphis were Raised,' in *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, X (1888), pp. 452-463.
5. A similar ramp, although on a far larger scale, is shown in use at Karnak in Georges Legrain, *Les Temples de Karnak* (Brussels, 1929), figs. 102, 103, and 107.
6. Cf S. Clarke and R. Engleback, *Ancient Egyptian Masonry*, (London, 1930), p. 92, where the authors discuss the building of a casemate ramp constructed of a framework of mud bricks.
7. The layering of the ramp has interesting implications for the stratigraphy; in section all but the upper surface layer would be horizontal rather than sloping.



**Editor's Note:** Although expatriates spending the holiday season in Egypt are spared the excesses of commercial hype associated with Christmas in the Western world, it is true that shrewd Egyptian entrepreneurs have indeed recognized that there are pounds to be made in December. In recent years plastic Santa Clauses, gaudy tinsel, Christmas trees fake and real, and specially crafted ornaments and gifts are relentlessly peddled by Cairo merchants. We guess that it was not always thus, and your editor hopes you will enjoy two descriptions of Christmases past found in the ARCE library.

"On the evening of the first Christmas holiday, I surprised my companions by a great fire, which I had caused to be lighted on the summit of the highest Pyramid. The flame illuminated both the other Pyramids splendidly, as well as the whole field of tombs, and shone quite across the valley as far as Cairo. That was indeed a Christmas Pyramid! . . . I then prepared a special Christmas tree for the following day, in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. We planted a young palm tree in the sarcophagus of the ancient king, and adorned it with lights and small presents, which I had ordered from the town for us children of the desert. St. Silvester must have his honors also. At twelve o'clock on New Year's Eve immense flames rose simultaneously at midnight from the three great Pyramids, and proclaimed the changes of the Christian year, far and wide, to the Islamite provinces at their base."

From Richard Lepsius  
Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia,  
and the Peninsula of Sinai  
(London, 1853), p. 55.

"My mother held the pleasant theory that at Christmas-time formality should give place to a homelier hospitality, and in addition to our special friends she would invite a number of guests who were themselves far from home and friends. The fare was as seasonable as it was possible to procure; and my father, with many willing helpers, used to decorate the rooms with palm branches and pepper berries, as a substitute for holly.

One Christmas Mamma determined to give pheasants instead of turkey as the piece *piece de resistance*. They were to be brought from Trieste by the Austrian Lloyd steamer, which was due to arrive early on Christmas morning. But when the day came a gale was blowing and the ship was delayed. Mamma was in tears; my father, who somehow or other was held responsible for the mishap, and who could not bear, in any case, to see my mother distressed, instituted a last-minute search through the town. The resulting 'bag' was three fine birds, at which my mother wrung her hands and wept anew, declaring that they would not go around. But my father was now on his

mettle and promised that all would be well. He would carve the pheasants himself, and by a secret code inform those of the house-party whom he had taken into his confidence what their part was to be. 'Do you take pheasant?' it would be incumbent upon them to refuse; but 'Will you take pheasant?' would imply permission to accept.

When the moment arrived, the conspirators on the side of the table first to be served responded nobly to the signal to refrain. But some refusals among the other diners had relieved the carver's anxieties and enabled him to change the formula by the time it came to our turn, on the lucky side of the table. The envy and disgust of our disappointed *vis-a-vis*, as we devoured our portions with gusto, so upset our composure that we were driven to explain our mirth to the guests who were not in on the secret.

At one of our Christmas parties at the turret house we sat down forty-eight to table, and played *The Mikado* afterwards.

From Mabel Caillard,  
*A Lifetime in Egypt, 1876 - 1935*  
(London, 1935), pp. 94-95.

## THE FUSTAT EXPEDITION

**Editor's Note:** Tucked within the significant, scholarly reports from the Fustat Expedition, active now for 25 years, are a number of George Scanlon's delightfully entertaining accounts of the rewards and frustrations of excavation. Reprinted here are excerpts from reports appearing in ARCE Newsletters No. 52 (1964) and No. 54 (1965).

## 1964:

After ten weeks of work at Fustat, nothing is more amusing or sobering than rereading my sanguine words in the last *Newsletter*. The total concession granted to ARCE comprised three parts, A, B, and C, to each of which I planned to devote part of the season. Well, we are still trying to find limits to what we have uncovered in Fustat-A, and we have just four weeks' digging left. Fustat-C must remain untouched for this season, though it will be the scene of the first month's activity next season, and on June 1st, I shall spend a fortnight making soundings in Fustat-B, the proposed site of the new housing project of the Governorate of Cairo. This, too, will be more intensively worked next season, if results warrant and if our stomachs hold out, for it is exactly here that a good deal of Cairo's garbage is aerated and processed for fertilizer.

Fertilizer has been the bane of our work. The whole northern limit of Fustat-A is quite simply the Manure Company of Egypt. There all the dead animals are rendered into fertilizer, and the ovens are going all day. The wind has not shifted perceptibly in five millenia or so; so we have had to grow used to the odor; we are now grimly amused by the quick resort to handkerchiefs on the part of our visitors. Since Fustat has been the rubbish heap of Cairo throughout the Mamluk, Ottoman, and modern periods, a good part of the earth we exhume has been through seven and a half centuries of the nitrogen cycle. I decided that we should put some of this enriched soil to use, so our Quftis laid out a very nice garden, complete with a marvelously abstract Upper Egyptian scarecrow, in front of our work tent. (It might be noted here that Aly Bahgat financed eighteen years of excavation through the sale of such sabbagh, or fertilized loam.)

A real menace, in the early days of the excavation, were the dead dogs that lay about the factory premises. These dogs, when alive, roved the open mounds of Fustat in packs such as one sees in the Gizeh desert area and they were left unburied, particularly on the slopes of the *ayn*, or water hole, used by the factory for sewage. Our Quftis were encamped not more than three hundred meters from

this dismal and dangerous mise-en-scene. The very air was rife with disease, and I would have had a continuous sick-list, to say nothing of a possible epidemic in our camp (and carried into Cairo by our men or our local basket-boys), if I had not taken some action. The persons running the factory at first refused to do anything about burying the animals, which was all I asked of them. The Governorate of Cairo, generally most cooperative, could do little against the factory until an alternative site was offered to the company. Manners, appeals to *healthy* brotherhood, cajolery, the exercise of un-Celtic patience, effected nothing, and the miasma thickened. Yet I won by a somewhat uneconomic stratagem: I had our men dump the excavated earth into the factory's *ayn*, to which it had no legal right, though it was conveniently put where it was by the high table of the Nile. I let it be known that I intended to spend four months in filling that *ayn*, which was within our concession, and would in any case eventually be filled when the proposed new highway was laid down through Fustat.

Within the hour, the owner of the factory was on the site haranguing. I pretended to have no knowledge of Arabic, and dealt with him through the Inspector from the Department of Antiquities assigned to our excavation. The owner was told that the moment the dogs were removed, the dumping would cease. They were removed pronto; but from time to time it is assumed that my vigilance will relax, and on three subsequent occasions, when the crows and kites have begun to circle over decaying canines, I have been obliged to call ninety men from their appointed tasks and put them to throwing earth into the *ayn*, until, amid cries and lamentations and buck-passing, the offending carcasses have been removed. Scholarship provides no advance training, strategic or psychological, for such contingencies; but then what is archaeology but a mode of continuous education.

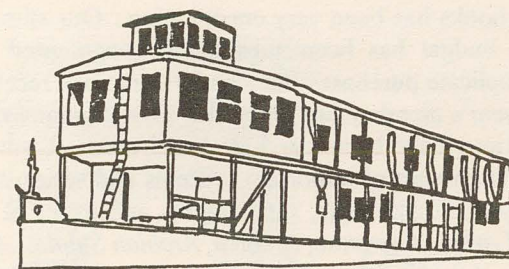
## 1965:

A world of difference lies between this season's work at Fustat and the drudgery of last year. We are now north of the fertilizer factory and up-wind from it. We are no longer stoned by the local populace, or rather the juvenile elements of it, as we go to and from work, and best of all, we are working very high on the *gabal*, the rocky shelf upon which the city of Fustat was built, and consequently we have no trouble at all with the water table of the Nile. In sum, we have uncovered in two and a half months an area of about the same extent as that which required four months of tedious unearthing in 1964.



These improvements in working conditions have not been accomplished without some difficulties. On my return to Cairo in the fall, I found that we might still be confronted by garbage. The chap who had convinced the drovers to dump their refuse somewhere else than on our former site had contracted with them to deposit it on the new one, and it took six weeks of almost daily sessions with the local authorities before I could cajole them into having the rubbish heaps removed from the area in which we planned to work. Our relief from stoning resulted from an accident. Our Inspector had explained, rather in-

dulgently, that the reason the urchins threw stones at us was because they thought we were English and therefore deeply engraved in memory as bad. One day, as we returned from work, he happened to be in the front seat of the truck, thus providing a good target for the harassing horde, who promptly stoned *him*. Enraged, he pursued the felons into the school yard and came back shouting that they were outside the context of civil life, monsters, criminal, dirty. The staff good-naturedly called the Inspector nothing but "Inglizi" for weeks. But we were stoned no more.



## THE NEWS FROM CAIRO

Winter 1987-88

### Riddle of the Sphinx

Winter is traditionally the busy season for the Cairo Center, and this year has been no exception, with the usual pattern of activities, visitors, and expeditions augmented by local events, chiefly the collapse of a portion of the

Sphinx's right shoulder in early February and the forced resignation a few days later by **Dr. Ahmed Kadry**, president of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. There are no indications that these developments will alter in any way the continued positive research climate, but we are certainly interested in seeing who is appointed to replace Dr. Kadry. At present the acting successor is **Dr. Abd al-Raouf Ali Yousef**, director of the Islamic Museum, and an old friend of many ARCE researchers.

### Cairo Visitors

Most notable among the steady stream of visitors to Cairo this season was ARCE president, **Dr. David O'Connor**, who arrived shortly after the first of the year with his Penn-Yale Abydos expedition team. A presidential reception was held in his honor at the new Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel on February 23rd, followed by a lecture on the Coptic Museum by its director, **Dr. Gawdat Gabra**. The other major expedition visitors during the winter months have been **Michael Hoffman's** Hierakonpolis crew from the University of South Carolina (a new Institutional Member of ARCE) on a full four-month season which has centered around the construction of a sorely needed dig house in addition to the regular excavations, and **Kent Weeks'** brief season in the Valley of the Kings over Christmas and New Year's, during which rubble was cleared from the entrance to the recently rediscovered tomb of the sons of Ramses II. Despite the extremely low Nile, two tour groups sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, brought several familiar faces into view, among them **Betsy Bryan** of the Johns Hopkins University (which recently renewed its ARCE Institutional Membership, thanks to **Betsy's** and **Jerry Cooper's** support), **Bob Dyson**, director

of the University Museum, **Ed Brovarski**, Boston Museum Egyptian curator, and **Del Nord**. Receptions were held for both groups on the *Fostat* and lively conversations between the visitors and local ARCE members and fellows ensued against the backdrop of sunset on the Nile. Among visitors in town at the time of the University Museum reception was **Steve Sidebotham** of the University of Delaware, en route around the world during his semester's sabbatical with a stopover here to submit his application for a summer dig at Berenice. **Ben Harer** and the **Olan Mills** visited the Center in mid-March en route to Hierakonpolis to visit Jay Jr., assistant field director at the site. **Kelly Simpson**, co-director of the Abydos excavation, spent a week at the site in the latter part of March, just as **David O'Connor** was finishing up to return to the States. All in at the end of the month was **Rob Wenke** and his group of excavators at Kom el-Hisn.

### Fostat Ups and Downs

The *Fostat* has seen a busy winter as well, with a number of residents, notably **Roxie Walker** and **Kathy Hansen**, who have set up a temporary home for the proposed Anthropological Center at Saqqara pending final EAO approval. A rollicking New Year's Eve party was held in honor of visiting U.S. director, **Terry Walz**, and nearly a hundred people braved the cool breezes to partake of a lavish dinner organized by **Amira Khattab** and copious champagne provided by Embassy friends of the Center. The Nile began to subside very soon after the first of the year, and by mid-January had reached a point lower than any could remember. The gangplank had to be lowered to the riverbank and was accessible only by ladder. At least the low river level gave us the opportunity to repair the collapsed portion of the wall at the south end of the garden before the water began to rise again, thankfully, around the second week in February. Its sudden rise, however, brought about severe damage to our venerable gangplank, and for several days access was hazardous to say the least; but a repair crew organized by Amira's son Amir made the necessary reinforcements and all is now well. The *Fostat* has two new crew members since the last report -- Ra'is Mohamed and Sofragi Galal. The ra'is has worked as a cook for many years, and is happy to prepare meals for residents. Reports from Roxie and Kathy are that his chefly services are well worth engaging.

### Lectures Series

The spring session of Wednesday seminars began on February 10th and ran through the end of March with research reports by ARCE Fellows and Fulbright affiliates **Don Reid**, **Ragui Assaad**, **Jim Harris**, **Valerie Hoffman-Ladd**, **Bill Smyth**, **Paula Sanders**, and **Clarissa Burt**. A parallel series of Tuesday evening lectures on the subject of restoration and conservation of antiquities by prominent Egyptian and locally-based academics began on February 2nd, with a fascinating account of the Nubian rescue efforts of the 1960s by **Dr. Gamal-eddin Mokhtar** and con-



tinued with talks by Gawdat Gabra, Abdel-Aziz Sadeq, Hanni Hamroush, and Cynthia Sheikholeslami.

#### Archaeology Club Notes

The Archaeology Club organized by Angela Millward-Jones has flourished this year with increased membership and its usual monthly lectures, augmented by several field trips to Dahshur, Meidum, and the Sinai, and a four-day camping tour of the Oases of the Western Desert at the end of March. The winter classes, one entitled "Images of the Absolute -- Religion in Ancient Egypt", given by Michael Jones, and the other, "Introduction to the Islamic Architecture of Cairo," given by William Lyster, have been widely subscribed with interest sufficient to require their being offered simultaneously in Ma'adi, Heliopolis, and Mohandessin, as well as the ARCE Center in Garden City. Michael Jones, ARCE fellow, is busily at work on the Memphis photographic archive project aided by a crew of volunteers led by Susan Frost.

#### Chasing Pounds and Dollars

ARCE's fund-raising activities have been relentlessly pursued, since September, by Marilyn Winter al-Ghossein, director of development with a number of new contributors targeted and donations received as well as promised. In an attempt to widen the base of ARCE support in the business community, the ARCE Board of Executives set up by Mary Ellen Lane has been reactivated with fifteen members drawn from both the American and Egyptian sectors. The first meeting was held on February 15 in the Embassy Chancery with Ambassador Wisner as our host, and a subsequent meeting has been scheduled for March 7 in the ARCE Library to nail down priorities and goals for both fund-raising and ARCE community service and outreach. High on the list of priorities is the search for both suitable housing for the Center, preferably a free-standing villa, and the funds to purchase and endow it.

#### Library News

Work on the Library continues daily. The response to our call for help [NARCE 136-7 & 138] in filling the missing serials through donation, exchange or purchase of

duplicate books has been very encouraging. Our slim acquisitions budget has been substantially augmented not only by duplicate purchases but also by donations received with this year's membership renewals. To date many valuable additions have been purchased and ordered, among them missing issues of important journals and series, such as the *Revue d'Egyptologie*, supplements and issues of the *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *Arabica*, *Arabian Studies*, *Aula Orientalis*, *Annales Islamologiques*, the *Annual Archaeological Bibliography*, *Index Islamicus*, *Muqarnas*, *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, the important *Archaeologische Veroffentlichungen* series of the German Institute in Cairo, and several dozens of the more recent publications of the IFAO, especially the *Memoires* and *Bibliothèque d'Etudes Arabes* series to name only a partial list. In addition a number of significant recent publications of the Egypt Exploration Society, current studies of the Palestinian problem, and new books on Egypt ancient and modern have been acquired. Most exciting has been the acquisition of the one missing text volume of our treasured *Description d'Egypte*. This volume, which was absent from the collection when acquired years ago, was found in Philadelphia by Bob Brier of Long Island University and we are very grateful for his help in completing this valuable resource for us.

We are also grateful to Jere Bacharach and David Batchelor, who donated needed reference works and also to Jere for his welcome donation in memory of Atiyeh Habachi. If anyone else would like to follow Jere's example, I would be happy to receive checks for the purchase of books for the library in her memory.

#### Your Attention, Please

Finally, one small procedural note for those preparing expedition applications: it is now necessary for Egyptian nationals working on excavations to submit security forms as well as foreigners. This development first came to our attention last spring and we thought at the time that this one instance might have been an aberration, but there is no doubt now that it is firm policy.



## THE NEWS FROM NEW YORK

#### TOUR TO EGYPT OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1988, FOR THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF EGYPTOLOGISTS

American Research Center in Egypt is offering a special air/hotel package for members wishing to attend the Fifth International Congress of Egyptologists in Cairo, October 29 - November 3, 1988. Three packages are available, depending on air carrier and hotel accommodations in Cairo.

The first, leaving New York Thursday, October 27, 1988 and returning Friday, November 4 (8 days), includes roundtrip airfare on KLM or Lufthansa and 7 nights in a deluxe hotel accommodations at the Ramses Hilton or Intercontinental (the new Semiramis). The per person double occupancy rate, based on bed and daily American style breakfast, for KLM is \$1,169; for Lufthansa, \$1,209.

The second, leaving New York Thursday, October 27 and returning November 4 (8 days), includes roundtrip airfare on KLM or Lufthansa with 7 nights' accommodation at "second class" hotels (Shepherd or Cosmopolitan). The per person double occupancy rate, based on bed and Continental breakfast, is \$1,099 for KLM and \$1,139 for Lufthansa.

A third package entails departure from New York on Friday, October 28 and return on Friday, November 4 on Egyptair, with 6 nights' accommodation at Shepherd or the Cosmopolitan. The per person double occupancy rate, based on bed and Continental breakfast, is \$995. Travel to and from Egypt on Sunday, October 30 and November 6 is also possible.

ARCE will also offer a special "on site" two-week tour of Egypt following the conclusion of the ICE meeting, beginning November 4. For further details, contact Terry Walz or Maggie Channon at the New York office of ARCE.

Single room occupancy generally costs between \$30 and \$70 extra per person depending on the hotel, while triple room occupancy reduces the per person package cost about the same amount.

These special flight and accommodation arrangements are available only to members of ARCE. If you are not already a member, you can join by sending \$35 membership dues to the New York office (or \$20 if student -- student validation is required when applying). Spouses and traveling companions of members need not specifically join. For further details, contact ARCE, The Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, 50 Washington Square South, New York, NYU 10012 (telephone: 212-998-8889).

A downpayment of \$150 is required to reserve a place, with full payment due 45 days prior to departure.

#### NEW MEMBERS AND DONORS

ARCE welcomes two new institutional members: The Johns Hopkins University (Center for Near Eastern Studies, of which Dr. Jerrold Cooper is the director), and Southwest Missouri State University, which is sending out a new expedition to Egypt under the direction of Dr. Juris Zarins. We are also happy to welcome back Brown University as an Institutional Member. The chairman of the Egyptology Department there is Dr. Leonard Lesko, a long-time ARCE friend.

On the individual level, ARCE is pleased to welcome as new Patrons of the Center: Christiana Walford of New York and Iver J. Iverson of Lone Tree, Iowa. It has also received a Sustaining Membership contribution from Pamela Harer and a Patron Membership contribution from Mr. G. Russell on behalf of the Berkeley Theban Mapping Project, for which thanks are here extended. We also wish to acknowledge a new Supporting Member in Egypt, Mr. Omar Sakr, who has become a member of the ARCE Advisory Board of Executives, recently reconstituted in Cairo.

#### GRANT NEWS

ARCE has been informed that the United States Information Agency plans to renew its grant to the Center for 1989-90, specifically for its fellowship program. The amount of the grant, \$129,400, is marginally less than for the 1988-89 year (\$130,000), but it has meant a smaller number of fellowships available for 1989. ARCE is grateful to the USIA for its continued support of the fellowship program in light of the general budgetary cutbacks in Washington as a result of the Graham Rudman law.

#### AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award Competition in the Humanities and Social Sciences. An award in the amount of \$500 in each category (Humanities and Social Sciences) will be given for the best dissertation on a topic in medieval or modern Middle East studies. All students completing their dissertations between July 1, 1987 and July 1, 1988 are eligible to apply for 1988 prizes. The



deadline for submission is August 1, 1988. Further information is obtainable from MESA Secretariat, Department of Oriental Studies, Franklin Building, Room 308, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721.

#### CONFERENCES

*The Middle East Studies Association of North America* will hold its 22nd annual meeting at the Beverley Hilton Hotel, Beverley Hills, from November 2-5, 1988. The Center for Near Eastern Studies at the UCLA will host the meeting. To add your name to the mailing list for information please write to: MESA Secretariat, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721 (Tel: 602 621 5850)

#### International Congress of Coptic Studies

The Fourth International Congress of Coptic Studies, sponsored by the International Association for Coptic Studies, will take place September 5-10, 1988. The congress will be hosted by the Institut Orientaliste, Universite Catholique de Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. Participation in the congress is open to anyone interested in Coptic studies. For more information, contact the Congress Secretary:

Prof. Julien Ries  
Institut Orientaliste  
College Erasme  
Place Blaise Pascal 1  
B - 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve  
BELGIUM

For information on membership in the International Association for Coptic Studies, contact the Newsletter Editor-Treasurer:

Prof. Tito Orlandi  
Via F. Civinini 24  
I - 00197 Roma  
ITALY

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

The Second Colloquium of the International Society for the Study of Settlement Archaeology in the Nile Valley will be held on August 26-28, 1988. The Colloquium will be sponsored by the Anthropology/Archaeology Program of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA. For further information please contact: Peter Lacovara, Assistant Curator, Department of Egyptian and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA 02115.

#### MUSEUM NEWS

##### METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

###### Gallery Talks and Lectures

Tuesday, January 26th, Helen C. Evans gave a gallery talk on the subject: "Early Christian Art: Egypt to England."

On Sunday, January 31st, an afternoon at the Met was dedicated to topics Egyptian. Four films were shown: "In the Beginning" (55 min.), "Egypt's Pyramids: Houses of Eternity" (22 min.), "Champollion: Egyptian Hieroglyphics Deciphered" (33 min.), and "Tutankhamun's Egypt: The Position of Scribes" (20 min.). Special lectures were given by visiting scholars Peter Lacovara, Assistant Curator, Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and William Ward, Visiting Professor of Egyptology, Brown University. Their topics were, respectively, "Excavations at the Royal City of El-Ballas in Upper Egypt" and "Beetles in Stone: The Meaning and Use of Egyptian Scarabs."

MARCH 8th and 10th: A gallery talk was given by Barbara A. Porter on the subject "Ancient Egyptian Funerary Customs."

MARCH 15th and 18th: Barbara Porter's gallery talk was concerned with "Objects of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt."

APRIL 5th and 6th: A gallery talk entitled "The art of the Great Mesopotamian Empires" was given by Joan Aruz.

Charles K. Wilkinson Lecture Series: 19th April, 5.00 p.m., Uris Auditorium. A special lecture entitled "Isis in Nubia: The Discovery of a Roman Mystery Cult at Qasr Ibrim" was presented by Nettie K. Adams, Associate Curator of the Museum of Anthropology, University of Kentucky and Textile Analyst for the Qasr Ibrim Expedition.

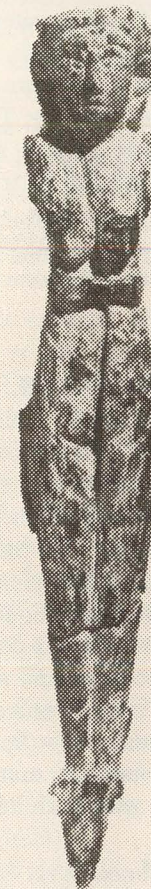
#### UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, MCKISSICK MUSEUM

An exhibition entitled "The First Egyptians," organized by Dr. Michael Hoffman, opened at the McKissick Museum, Columbia, South Carolina, on April 8 and will close June 19, 1988 prior to visiting five other museums throughout the country.

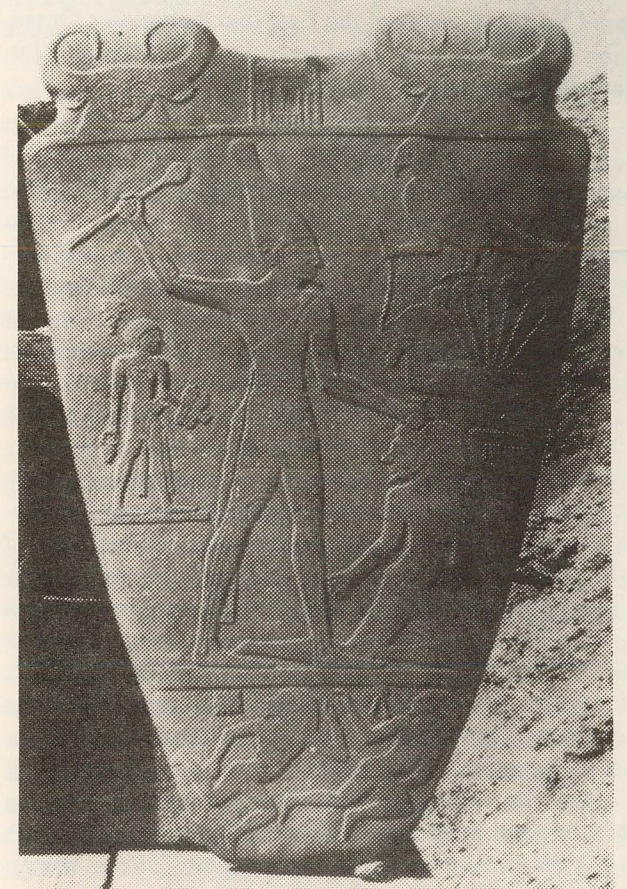
The final stop on its tour will be the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, November 20, 1989 to March 15, 1990. According to Karin Willoughby, curator of natural sciences at McKissick, the exhibit "is the largest and most comprehensive exploration of predynastic Egypt to date." It will feature more than 130 artifacts from ancient Egypt, models of an Egyptian palace, home and temple, castings taken off sandstone in Egypt, tomb groupings, and a mummy's mask. About one million people are expected to see the exhibit as it travels throughout the United States.

#### BOSTON MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

The eagerly-awaited "Ramesses the Great" Exhibition opened at the Museum of Science on April 30, 1988 and may be visited throughout the summer until August 30, 1988. Boston is the only site on the North American tour of the exhibition where the Colossus of Ramesses II will be on view in a specially constructed outdoor pavilion,



Left: Rare ivory female statuette, dating from 3200-3100 B.C., is exhibited in "The First Egyptians" show. Right: A rare cast of the Narmer Palette is on display during the McKissick Museum show.



designed by architects E. Verner Johnson and Associates of Boston, resembling an ancient Egyptian temple. The design of the so-called Colossus Temple, 73 feet long, 43 feet wide and 40 feet high, has been endorsed by the Egyptian Government: it is hoped that the temple will become a permanent part of the travelling exhibition as it continues on its tour.

Admission to the exhibition is by reserved tickets which are already on sale. Telephone bookings may be made at the Museum, (tel: 617 723 2505), purchased at the Box Office, or from ticket outlets.

#### MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

Egyptophiles are being well looked after in Boston this year. "Mummies and Magic: the Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt" opens to the public on September 14, 1988. The exhibition is due to close on December 11, 1988.

This spring sees the last three in a series of nine lectures offered by the Friends of Egyptian Art. Lectures are held one Wednesday per month, beginning at 7:30 p.m., from September to May. In addition to regularly scheduled lectures, special presentations by visiting scholars are offered to members. The Friends of Egyptian Art provides an opportunity for people in the Boston area to gain a greater familiarity with both the Museum's outstanding collection and the current research being conducted by Museum staff and scholars from around the world. For

further information, call (617) 267 9300, ext. 325. Lectures are as follows:

March 23: Donald B. Redford, University of Toronto, "New Discoveries at Karnak 1987-88."

April 6: Charles Bonnet, Geneva University, "New Light on Kerma." (The lecture is preceded by a Reception at 6.30 p.m.)

May 18: Peter Lacovara and Department Staff, "Mummies and Magic: Behind the Scenes."

#### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

In early February, following six days of sandstorms at Giza, a limestone slab, weighing about 660 pounds, fell from the shoulder of the Sphinx. The monument, built by the Pharaoh Chephren (4th Dynasty, ca. 2550 B.C.), has been the subject of restoration work in recent years and the latest incident has caused debate over the reasons for damage to the crumbling facade. As reported by *The New York Times* (21 February 1988), Zahi Hawass, archaeologist in charge of the Giza Area, explained that salt, acting on the body of the Sphinx, resulted in erosion that was further aggravated by storm winds. The purpose of the structure, which rests on its lion's paws at the base of the Giza Plateau, is debated, but many experts believe it was intended as a guardian of the Pyramids and of the desert beyond.



As a result of this extraordinary happening, Dr. Ahmad Kadry, director of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization since 1981, was asked to resign. No new appointment has been made as of this writing.

The President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, accompanied by his wife, recently paid a three-day state visit to Washington. During her short stay, Mrs. Mubarak talked to journalists about her own role in Egypt today. The interview, published in *The New York Times* (13 February 1988), commented that Mrs. Mubarak was little known in the West until she headed the Egyptian delegation to the United Nations Decade for Women Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985. On her recent visit to Washington, Mrs. Mubarak's activities included lecturing to the Smithsonian Institution about one of her recent projects, Egypt's first Museum of Children, a place where young people may learn to appreciate their own natural and cultural environment. A more controversial subject, that of family planning, is also on Mrs. Mubarak's agenda and in Egypt's future. She admits that the subject has met with considerable resistance in her country, but stresses that the issue is "perhaps the biggest problem that we face as a nation." Mrs. Mubarak later added, "When we talk about modernizing Egyptian society and talk about Western influence, Egyptians have always tried to maintain their identity in the midst of all this. How can we have Western technology and at the same time maintain our own values and traditions that we cherish so deeply? This is always this conflict and it will continue I think."

*The Times* of London (7 March 1988) reported an astonishing discovery at the home of Lord Carnarvon, grandson of the Earl who sponsored archaeological expeditions to Egypt and who, with Howard Carter, was present at the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. The present Lord Carnarvon last year inherited the ancestral home, Highclere Castle, and during an inventory of its contents, three hundred Egyptian artifacts were found concealed in a disused part of the building. According to the present Earl and British Museum sources, the objects arrived in Britain legitimately under an agreement which allowed Carnarvon fifty per cent of the objects recovered. However, the Egyptian Government, as reported in *The New York Times* (10 March 1988), asserted that no such arrangement existed. The Egyptian Ministry of Culture has instructed the Egyptian ambassador in London (Yousef Sharara, known to many in this country as a result of his posting here) to seek immediate return of the artifacts.

#### ARCE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NEWS

A lecture given by Dr. Anthony Spalinger, University of Auckland, New Zealand will be held on Monday, 23rd May at 7.00 p.m. at UCLA. His topic will be "The Economy of Ancient Egyptian Temples." The following evening Dr. Spalinger will hold a special seminar session. Further details may be obtained from Noel Sweitzer.

#### ARCE/SC Tour to Egypt (December, 1988)

A tour of ancient Egyptian sites, the Kharga Oasis, Middle Egypt, the Fayoum, Dakhla and Amarna will be conducted by Dr. William J. Murnane, Jr. (Department of History, Memphis State University, Tennessee). The price of the tour is \$3,300 per person and includes airfare, deluxe accommodation and full board, all excursions and sightseeing charges, entrance fees and tips. For further details, write to Noel Sweitzer, 10535 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90024, or telephone (213) 747 2790.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Timothy Mitchell (ARCE Fellow, 1984-85), *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 1988, \$42.50). From the blurb: "The author examines the peculiar methods of order and truth that characterise the modern West through a re-reading of Europe's colonial impact on nineteenth-century Egypt. He brings to light parallels between such practices as urban planning, the building of model villages, new military techniques, the opening up of 'the harem,' the attempt to found political authority on a monitorial system of schooling, and new modes of writing and communication. These practices, he argues, introduced a series of oppositions -- between structure and 'thing,' conceptual and material, mind and body -- which provided colonial power with both its mechanism and authority."

Alan K. Bowman's book *Egypt After the Pharaohs 332 B.C. - A.D. 642*, has recently been published by University of California Press. The period covered in the book begins with the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. through to the Islamic invasion of A.D. 642. Professor Bowman asserts that under Egypt's foreign rulers -- the Greeks, Romans and Byzantine Empire, that Egypt attained a level of prosperity and development that was not achieved again until the 19th Century. Price: \$25.00

Charles E. Butterworth (ARCE Fellow, most recently, 1984-85, and former ARCE board member), *Averroes Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* (Princeton University Press, 1986). Said to be the greatest among the Muslim commentators on Aristotle, Ibn Rushd, known as Averroes in the West (1126-98) in this work investigates his own poetical tradition from a unique Platonic and Aristotelean perspective. Charles Butterworth's translation of the commentary is not only the first in English from the Arabic original, but the first from the Arabic text in any language other than medieval Hebrew or Latin. The translation is based on a critical edition of the Arabic text prepared by Butterworth and Ahmad Haridi and published under the auspices of the American Research Center in Egypt. Price: \$22.50. *Talkhis Kitab al-shi'r*, the Arabic version of the Butterworth and Haridi volume, published by ARCE, is available from Eisenbrauns, Box 275, Winona Lake, IN 46590. Price: \$20.00 bound.

Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman (ARCE Fellows 1981-2; 1978-80) have written *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class 1882-1954*. (Princeton Studies on the Near East, 1988).

The work seeks to provide not only a new perspective on Egyptian labour history but also a basis for comparison with other countries of the Middle East and the Third World in general. Price: \$75.00

Roy Mottahedeh (ARCE Fellow 1987-88) is the author of *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton Studies on the Near East, 1986). The book concerns the social structure of western Iran and Southern Iraq in the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. Price: \$27.00 and \$12.50.

Susan Slymovics (ARCE fellow 1982-1983) (1984-1985). *The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance*, University of California Publications in Modern Philosophy, Volume 120 (January 1988). In Egypt, Awadallah, an Arab poet and singer of tales recites a folk epic known throughout the Arab speaking world as Sirat Bani Hilal. In her book, the author presents a biography of the poet together with annotated text and commentary on a single performance. A videotape, VHS 3/4", "The Merchant of Art" (filmed in colour and lasting 23 minutes) is available at a purchase price of \$250 per copy or rental, \$40.00. Dr. Slymovics' article "Arabic Folk Literature and Political Expression" appeared in Volume 8, No. 2 of Arab Studies Quarterly, (1986) from Dr. S. Slymovics, Dept. of Performance Studies, 721 Broadway, New York University, New York, New York 10003. (Tel: 212 998-1620)

Lila Abu-Lughod (ARCE Fellow 1986-87), *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, University of California Press, 1986; also American University in Cairo Press, 1987 (paperback). From the blurb: "At once a richly textured ethnography of a Middle Eastern

society, a complex study of the vital role of oral literature, and a sophisticated analysis of gender ideology that forces us to revise our views of women in Arab society, *Veiled Sentiments* is also an original contribution to cultural theory. What begins as a puzzle about a single poetic genre becomes a reflection on the nature of ideology and its relationship both to social systems and to individual experience."

Richard Sullivan, *The Story of Ramses* (Edwin Mellen Press, Box 450, Lewiston, NY 14092, paper price not indicated) appeared in time for the showing of the Ramesses the Great exhibit about the country. It is pleasantly designed and illustrated by Beth Krockner and seems written for the general audience.

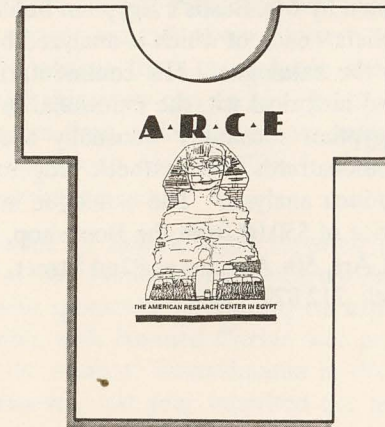
#### CATALOGUES

Bernard V. Bothmer, *Antiquities from the Collection of Christos G. Bastis*. The exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art closed in January, but copies of the catalogue are still available at the bookshop. To quote from Roberta Smith's review of the exhibition in *The New York Times*, Friday, 18 December 1987, "The Show is dominated by Mr. Bastis's Egyptian holdings-heads, statues and reliefs - each of which is analyzed by Bernard V. Bothmer in the catalogue. His commentaries balance the formal and historical wit, the emotional in a way that makes the Egyptian sensibility unusually accessible and that also demonstrates how aesthetic judgement originates in inch-by-inch analysis." The catalogue may be obtained for the price of \$50.00 from the Bookshop, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 5th Avenue at 82nd Street, New York, NY 10018. Tel: 212 879-5500.



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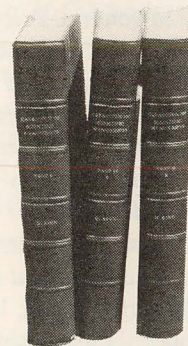
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